

TRAVELS

OF

ST. LEON.

ST. LEON:

A
TALE

OF THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

By WILLIAM GODWIN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

THE SECOND EDITION.

VOL. I.

*Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee,
thou liar of the first magnitude.*

CONGREVE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. G. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW,

BY J. CUNDEE, IVY-LANE, NEWGATE-STREET.

1800.

P R E F A C E.

THE following passage from a work, said to be written by the late Dr. John Campbel, and entitled *Hermippus Redivivus*, suggested the first hint of the present performance.

“ There happened in the year 1687, an odd accident at Venice, that made a very great stir then, and which I think deserves to be rescued from oblivion. The great freedom and ease with which all persons, who make a good appearance, live in that city, is known sufficiently to all who are acquainted with it; such will not therefore be surprised,

prised, that a stranger, who went by the name of signor Gualdi, and who made a considerable figure there, was admitted into the best company, though no body knew who or what he was. He remained at Venice some months, and three things were remarked in his conduct. The first was, that he had a small collection of fine pictures, which he readily shewed to any body that desired it; the next, that he was perfectly versed in all arts and sciences, and spoke on every subject with such readiness and sagacity, as astonished all who heard him; and it was in the third place observed, that he never wrote or received any letter; never desired any credit, or made use of bills of exchange, but paid for every

every thing in ready money, and lived decently, though not in splendour.

“ This gentleman met one day at the coffee-house with a Venetian nobleman, who was an extraordinary good judge of pictures: he had heard of signor Gualdi's collection, and in a very polite manner desired to see them, to which the other very readily consented. After the Venetian had viewed signor Gualdi's collection, and expressed his satisfaction, by telling him, that he had never seen a finer, considering the number of pieces of which it consisted; he cast his eye by chance over the chamber-door, where hung a picture of this stranger. The Venetian looked upon it, and then upon him. This picture was drawn

for you, sir, says he to signor Gualdi, to which the other made no answer, but by a low bow. You look, continued the Venetian, like a man of fifty, and yet I know this picture to be of the hand of Titian, who has been dead one hundred and thirty years, how is this possible? It is not easy, said signor Gualdi, gravely, to know all things that are possible; but there is certainly no crime in my being like a picture drawn by Titian. The Venetian easily perceived by his manner of speaking, that he had given the stranger offence, and therefore took his leave.

“ He could not forbear speaking of this in the evening to some of his friends, who resolved to satisfy themselves by looking upon the picture

picture the next day. In order to have an opportunity of doing so, they went to the coffee-house about the time that signor Gualdi was wont to come thither and not meeting with him, one of them who had often conversed with him, went to his lodgings to enquire after him, where he heard, that he had set out an hour before for Vienna. This affair made a great noise, and found a place in all the news-papers of that time.”*

* To this story, in the book from which I have quoted it, is subjoined the following reference, “*Memoires historiques*, 1687, tom. i. p. 365.” Being desirous of giving my extract from the oldest authority, I caused the British Museum, and the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge to be searched for this publication, but in vain. The story and the reference are, not improbably, both of them the fictions of the English writer.

It is well known that the philosopher's stone, the art of transmuting metals into gold; and the *elixir vite*, which was to restore youth, and make him that possessed it immortal, formed a principal object of the studies of the curious for centuries. Many stories, beside this of signor Gualdi, have been told, of persons who were supposed to be in possession of those wonderful secrets, in the search of which hundreds of unfortunate adventurers wasted their fortunes and their lives.

It has been said of Shakespear, that he

Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new ;*

* Johnson's Occasional Prologue on Garrick's assuming the management of Drury-lane Theatre.

but

but the burthen sustained by Shakespear was too heavy for the shoulders of any other individual. I leave the first part of the task above mentioned to be divided among those celebrated novelists, living and dead, who have attempted to delineate the scenes of real life. In this little work I have endeavoured to gain footing in one neglected track of the latter province. The hearts and the curiosity of readers have been assailed in so many ways, that we, writers who bring up the rear of our illustrious predecessors, must be contented to arrive at novelty in whatever mode we are able. The foundation of the following tale is such as, it is not to be supposed, ever existed. But, if I have mixed human feelings

ings and passions with incredible situations, and thus rendered them impressive and interesting, I shall entertain some hope to be pardoned the boldness and irregularity of my design.

Some readers of my graver productions will perhaps, in perusing these little volumes, accuse me of inconsistency; the affections and charities of private life being every where in this publication a topic of the warmest eulogium, while in the Enquiry concerning Political Justice they seemed to be treated with no degree of indulgence and favour. In answer to this objection all I think it necessary to say on the present occasion, is that, for more than four years, I have been anxious for
oppor-

opportunity and leisure to modify some of the earlier chapters of that work in conformity to the sentiments inculcated in this. Not that I see cause to make any change respecting the principle of justice, or any thing else fundamental to the system there delivered; but that I apprehend domestic and private affections inseparable from the nature of man, and from what may be styled the culture of the heart, and am fully persuaded that they are not incompatible with a profound and active sense of justice in the mind of him that cherishes them. The way in which these seemingly jarring principles may be reconciled, is in part pointed out in a little book which I gave to the public in the year 1798, and which I will

I will here therefore take the liberty to quote.

“ A found morality requires that *nothing human should be regarded by us as indifferent* ; but it is impossible we should not feel the strongest interest for those persons whom we know most intimately, and whose welfare and sympathies are united to our own. True wisdom will recommend to us individual attachments; for with them our minds are more thoroughly maintained in activity and life than they can be under the privation of them, and it is better that man should be a living being, than a stock or a stone. True virtue will sanction this recommendation; since it is the object of virtue to produce happiness, and since the man
who

who lives in the midst of domestic relations, will have many opportunities of conferring pleasure, minute in the detail, yet not trivial in the amount, without interfering with the purposes of general benevolence. Nay, by kindling his sensibility, and harmonising his soul, they may be expected, if he is endowed with a liberal and manly spirit, to render him more prompt in the service of strangers and the public." *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Ch. VI. p. 90. 2d. Edition.*

Nov. 26, 1799.

* * * For the sake of the unlearned reader, I subjoin the following illustration of the motto prefixed to these volumes.

Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was a Portuguese, born about the year 1510. Becoming a fugitive

gitive from his country at a very immature age, he travelled through many parts of Africa and Asia for twenty-one years, and, by his own account, passed through a surprising number of extraordinary and distressful adventures. The translation of his travels into French forms a very thick volume in quarto, and bears date in the year 1628.

Vicissitudes de la Fortune, 12mo.

Tom. I. p. 1.

TRAVELS

OF

ST. LEON.

CHAP. I.

THERE is nothing that human imagination can figure brilliant and enviable, that human genius and skill do not aspire to realize. In the early ages of antiquity, one of the favourite topics of speculation was a perfect system of civil policy; and no sooner had Plato delineated his imaginary republic, than he sought for a spot of earth upon which to execute his plan. In my own times, and for upwards of a century before them, the subject which has chiefly occupied men

VOL. I.

B

of

of intrepid and persevering study, has been the great secret of nature, the *opus magnum*, in its two grand and inseparable branches, the art of multiplying gold, and of defying the inroads of infirmity and death.

It is notorious that uncommon talents and unparalleled industry have been engaged in this mighty task. It has, I know, been disputed by the audacious adversaries of all sober and reasonable evidence, whether these talents and industry have in any case attained the object they sought. It is not to my purpose to ascertain the number of those whose victory over the powers and inertness of matter has been complete. It is enough that I am a living instance of the existence of such men. To these two secrets, if they are to be considered as two, I have been for years in the habit of resorting for my gratification. I have in my possession

cession the choice of being as wealthy as I please, and the gift of immortal life. Every thing that I see almost, I can without difficulty make my own for what palaces, pictures, parks or gardens, rarities of art or nature, have not a price at which their owner will consent to yield them? The luxuries of every quarter of the world are emptied at my feet. I can command, to an extent almost inconceivable, the passions of men. What heart can withstand the assault of princely magnificence? What man is inaccessible to a bribe? Add to these advantages, that I am invulnerable to disease. Every sun that rises, finds the circulations of my frame in the most perfect order. Decrepitude can never approach me. A thousand winters want the power to furrow my countenance with wrinkles, or turn my hairs to silver. Exhaustless wealth and eternal youth,

are the attributes by which I am distinguished from the rest of mankind.

I do not sit down now to write a treatise of natural philosophy. The condition by which I hold my privileges is, that they must never be imparted. I sit down purely to relate a few of those extraordinary events that have been produced in the period of my life which is already elapsed, by the circumstances and the peculiarity to which I have just alluded.

It is so obvious, as to make it almost improper to specify it, that the pursuit in which so many of my contemporaries are engaged, and the end of which I have so singularly achieved, is in its appearance infinitely more grand and interesting, than that which occupied the thoughts of Plato and the most eminent writers of antiquity. What is political liberty, compared with unbounded riches and immortal vigour?

The

The immediate application of political liberty is, to render a man's patrimony or the fruits of his industry completely his own, and to preserve them from the invasion of others. But the petty detail of preservation or gradual acquisition, can never enter into competition with the *great secret*, which can endow a man in a moment with every thing that the human heart can wish. Considered in this light, how mean and contemptible does the ambition of the boasted ancients appear, compared with ours? What adept or probationer of the present day would be content to resign the study of God and the profounder secrets of nature, and to bound his ardour to the investigation of his own miserable existence?

It may seem perhaps to many, that the history of a person possessed of advantages so unparalleled as mine, must be like the history of paradise, or

of the future happiness of the blessed, too calm and motionless, too much of one invariable texture and exempt from vicissitude, to excite the attention or interest the passions of the reader. If he will have patience, and apply to the perusal of my narrative, he will in no long time perceive how far his conjecture is founded in sagacity and reason.

Some persons may be curious to know what motives can have induced a man of such enormous wealth, and so every way qualified to revel in delights, to take the trouble of penning his memoirs. The immortality with which I am endowed seems to put out of the question the common motives that relate to posthumous fame.

The curiosity here mentioned, if it really exists, I cannot consent to gratify. I will anticipate nothing. In the progress of my story, my motive
for

for recording it will probably become evident.

I am descended from one of the most ancient and honourable families of the kingdom of France. I was the only child of my father, who died while I was an infant. My mother was a woman of rather a masculine understanding, and full of the prejudices of nobility and magnificence. Her whole soul was in a manner concentrated in the ambition to render me the worthy successor of the counts de St. Leon, who had figured with distinguished reputation in the wars of the Holy Land. My father had died fighting gallantly in the plains of Italy under the standard of Louis the Twelfth; a prince whose name was never repeated to me, unaccompanied with the praises due to his military prowess, and to the singular humanity of disposition by which he acquired the title of *The father*

of his people. My mother's mind was inflamed with the greatness of my ancestors, and she indefatigably sought to kindle in my bosom a similar flame. It has been a long-established custom for the barons and feudal vassals of the kings of France to enter with great personal expence into the brilliant and dazzling expeditions of their sovereigns; and my father greatly impaired his fortune in preparations for that very campaign in which he terminated his life. My mother industriously applied herself to the restoration of my patrimony; and the long period of my minority afforded her scope for that purpose.

It was impossible for any boy to be treated with more kindness and considerate indulgence, than I was during the period of my adolescence. My mother loved me to the very utmost limits perhaps of human affection. I was
her

her darling and her pride, her waking study, and her nightly dream. Yet I was not pampered into corporeal imbecility, or suffered to rust in inactivity of mind. I was provided with the best masters. I was excited, and successfully excited, zealously to apply myself to the lessons they taught. I became intimately acquainted with the Italian writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I was initiated in the study of the classics, to the cultivation of which the revival of letters at this time gave particular ardour. I was instructed in the principles of the fine arts. There was no species of accomplishment at that time in vogue, that my mother was not anxious I should make my own. The only science I neglected, was the very science which has since given rise to the most extraordinary events of my life. But the object to which my attention was

principally called, was the pursuit of military exercises, and the cultivation of every thing that could add to the strength, agility or grace of my body, and to the adventurousness and enterprize of my mind. My mother loved my honour and my fame, more than she loved my person.

A circumstance that tended perhaps more than any other to fix the yet fluctuating character of my youthful mind, was my being present as a spectator at the celebrated meeting between Francis the First, and Henry the Eighth, king of England, in a field between Ardres and Guines. My mother refused to accompany me, being already arrived at an age in which curiosity and the love of festive scenes are usually diminished, and the expences incurred by all the nobility who attended upon this scene being incompatible with the economy to which she rigidly adhered.

I was

I was therefore placed under the protection of the marquis de Villeroy, her brother, and, with two servants who attended me, formed a part of his suite.

I was at this time fifteen years of age. My contemplations had been familiar with ideas of magnificence and grandeur, but my life had been spent in the most sequestered retirement. This contrast had a particular effect upon my disposition; it irritated to a very high degree my passion for splendour and distinction; I lived in the fairy fields of visionary greatness, and was more than indifferent to the major part of the objects around me. I pined for every thing the reverse of my present condition; I cultivated the exercises in which I was engaged, only as they were calculated to prepare me for future atchievements.

By the incident I have mentioned, I was transported at once from a scene of modest obscurity, to a scene of the most lavish splendour that the world perhaps ever contemplated. I never remembered to have seen even Paris itself. The prevailing taste of Europe has for some time led very much to costliness in dress. This taste, in its present profusion, I believe took its rise in the field of the Vale of Ardres. The two kings were both in the vigour of their youth, and were said to be the handsomest men of the age in which they lived. The beauty of Henry was sturdy and muscular; that of Francis more refined and elegant, without subtracting in any considerable degree from the firmness of his make. Henry was four years older than his brother monarch. The first of them might have been taken as a model to represent a youthful Hercules, and the last an Apollo.

The

The splendour of dress that was worn upon this occasion, exceeds almost all credibility. Every person of distinction might be said in a manner to carry an estate upon his shoulders; nor was the variety of garments inferior to the richness. Wolsey, a man whose magnificence of disposition was only surpassed by the pride of his soul, was for the most part the director of the whole. He possessed the most absolute ascendancy over the mind of his master, at the same time that Francis artfully indulged his caprice, that he might claim from him in return a similar indulgence in weightier matters.

The pomp of processions, and the ceremony of opening this memorable festival, went first; a sort of solemn and half-moving pageant, which the eye took in at leisure, and took in till it was filled. This was succeeded by every thing that was rapid, animated and

and interesting: masques and exhibitions of all kinds; and, which was still more to me, and which my soul devoured with indescribable ardour, justings, tilts and tournaments without end. The beauty of the armour, the caparisons of the steeds, the mettle of the animals themselves, and the ardour and grace of the combatants, surpassed every thing that my fancy had ever painted. These scenes were acted in the midst of a vast amphitheatre of spectators, where all that was noble and eminent of either country was assembled, the manliness of aspiring youth, and the boundless varieties of female attraction. All were in their gayest attire; every eye was lighted up with complacency and joy. If Heraclitus, or any other morose philosopher who has expatiated on the universal misery of mankind, had entered the field of Ardres, he must have retracted his assertions,

assertions, or fled from the scene with confusion. The kings were placed at either end of the lists, surrounded with their courtiers. Every eye through this vast assembly was fixed upon the combatants; the body of every one present was inclined this way or that, in unconscious sympathy with the redoubted knights. From time to time, as the favourites of either party prevailed, the air was rent with shouts and acclamations.

What added to the fascination of all that I have yet mentioned, was that now, for the first time in an equal degree perhaps for centuries, the stiffness of unweildy form was laid aside, and the heart of man expanded itself with generosity and confidence. It burst the fetters of ages; and, having burst them, it seemed to revel in its new-found liberty. It is well known that, after a few days of idle precau-
tion

tion and specious imprisonment on both sides, Francis one morning mounted his horse, and appeared, without guards or any previous notice, before the tent of Henry. The example was contagious, and from this time all ceremony was laid aside. The kings themselves entered personally into the combats of their subjects. It was a delightful and a ravishing spectacle, to witness the freedom of the old Roman manners, almost of the old Roman Saturnalia, polished and refined with all that was graceful and humane in the age of chivalry.

It may easily be imagined what an effect a scene like this was calculated to produce upon a youth of my age and my education. I recollected with anguish that the immaturity of my years precluded me from taking any active part in the spectacle. My appearance however was sufficiently advantageous.

I was

I was presented to Francis the First. He did me the honour to question me respecting my studies; and, finding in me some knowledge of those arts and that literature, of which he was himself so zealous a favourer, he expressed to my uncle a great satisfaction with my figure and acquisitions. I might from this time have been taken to court, and made one of the pages to this illustrious monarch. But the plan of my mother was different. She did not wish for the present that my eye should be satiated with public scenes, or that the public should grow too familiarly acquainted with my person. She rightly judged that my passion for the theatre of glory would grow more impetuous, by being withheld for some time from the gratifications for which it panted. She wished that I should present myself for the first time among the nobility of France an accomplished

complished cavalier, and not suffer the disadvantage of having exposed in the eye of the world those false steps and frailties, from which the inexperience of youth is never entirely free. These motives being explained to the king, he was graciously pleased to sanction them with his approbation. I accordingly returned to finish the course of my education at my paternal chateau upon the banks of the Garonne.

The state of my mind during the three succeeding years, amply justified the sagacity of my mother. I was more eager for improvement than I had ever yet been. I had before formed some conceptions of the career of honour, from the books I had read, and from the conversation of this excellent matron. But my reveries were impotent and little, compared with what I had now seen. Like the author of our holy religion, I had spent my forty days without

without food in the wilderness, when suddenly my eyes were opened, and I was presented with all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them. The fairy scene continued for a moment, and then vanished; leaving nothing behind it on all sides but the same barrenness and gloom by which it had been preceded. I never shut my eyes without viewing in imagination the combats of knights and the train of ladies. I had been regarded with distinction by my sovereign; and Francis the First stood before my mind the abstract and model of perfection and greatness. I congratulated myself upon being born in an age and country so favourable to the acquisition of all that my soul desired.

I was already eighteen years of age, when I experienced the first misfortune that ever befel me. It was the death of my mother. She felt the approach

approach of her dissolution several weeks before it arrived, and held repeated conversations with me, respecting the feelings I ought to entertain, and the conduct it would become me to pursue, when she should be no more.

“ My son,” said she, “ your character, and the promise of your early years, have constituted my only consolation since the death of your excellent father. Our marriage was the result of a most sincere and exclusive attachment, and never did man more deserve to be loved than Reginald de St. Leon. When he died the whole world would have been nothing to me but one vast blank, if he had not left behind him the representative of his person, and the heir to his virtues. While I was busied in your education, I seemed to be discharging the last duty to the memory of my husband.

The

The occupation was sacred to the honour of the dead, even before it became so peculiarly pleasing to me upon its own account as I afterwards found it. I hope I have in some measure discharged the task in the manner in which my lord your father would have wished it to have been discharged if he had lived. I am thankful to heaven that I have been spared so long for so dear and honourable a purpose.

“ You must now, my son, stand by yourself, and be the arbitrator of your own actions. I could have wished that this necessity might have been a little further deferred ; but I trust your education has not been of that sort which is calculated to render a young man helpless and contemptible. You have been taught to know your rank in society, and to respect yourself. You have been instructed in every thing that might most effectually forward

you in the career of glory. There is not a young cavalier among all the nobility of France more accomplished, or that promises to do greater honour to his name and his country. I shall not live to witness the performance of this promise, but the anticipation even now, pours a long stream of sunshine on my departing hour.

“Farewel, my son! You no longer stand in need of my maternal care. When I am gone, you will be compelled more vividly to feel that singleness and self-dependence which are the source of all virtue. Be careful of yourself. Be careful that your career may be both spotless and illustrious. Hold your life as a thing of no account when it enters into competition with your fame. A true knight thinks no sacrifice and suffering hard that honour demands. Be humane, gentle, generous and intrepid. Be prompt
to

to follow wherever your duty calls you. Remember your ancestors, knights of the Holy Cross. Remember your father. Follow your king, who is the mirror of valour; and be ever ready for the service of the distressed. May providence be your guardian. May heaven shower down a thousand blessings upon your innocence and the gallantry of your soul!"

The death of my mother was a severe blow to my heart. For some time all the visions of greatness and renown which had hitherto been my chosen delight, appeared distasteful to me. I hung over her insensible corpse. When it had been committed to the earth, I repaired every day to the spot where it was deposited, at the hour of dusk, when all visible objects faded from the eye, when nature assumed her saddest tints, and the whole world seemed about to be wrapped in the
darkness

darkness of the tomb. The dew of night drizzled unheeded on my head ; and I did not turn again towards the turrets of the chateau, till the hour of midnight had already sounded through the stillness of the scene.

Time is the healer of almost every grief, particularly in the sprightly season of early youth. In no long period I changed the oppression of inactive sorrow, for the affectionate and pious recollection of my mother's last instructions. I had been too deeply imbued with sentiments of glory, for it to be possible, when the first excess of grief was over, that I should remain in indolence. The tender remembrance of my mother itself, in no long time, furnished a new stimulus to my ambition. I forgot the melancholy spectacle of the last struggles of her expiring life ; I even became accustomed no longer to hear her voice, no longer

longer to expect her presence, when I returned to the chateau from a short excursion. Her last advice was now all that survived of the author of my existence.

CHAP. II.

I WAS in this state of mind, when, early one morning in the beginning of summer, soon after I rose, I was startled by the sound of trumpets in the plain near the chateau. The bugle at the gate was presently sounded; the drawbridge was let down; and the marquis de Villeroy entered the court-yard, accompanied by about thirty knights in complete armour. I saluted him with respect, and the tenderness excited by recent grief. He took me by the hand, after a short repast in the hall, and led me to my closet.

“My son,” said he, “it is time to throw off the effeminacy of sorrow, and to prove yourself a true soldier of the standard of France.”

“I trust,

“I trust, my lord,” replied I, with modest earnestness, “that you well know, there is nothing after which my heart so ardently aspires. There is nothing that I know worth living for, but honour. Show me the path that leads to it, or rather show me the occasion that affords scope for the love of honour to display itself, and you shall then see whether I am backward to embrace it. I have a passion pent up within me, that feeds upon my vitals. It disdains speech; it burns for something more unambiguous and substantial.”

“It is well,” rejoined my uncle. “I expected to find you thus. Your reply to my admonition is worthy of the blood of your ancestors, and of the maternal instructions of my sister. And, were you as dull as the very stones you tread on, what I have to

tell you, might even then rouse you into animation and ardour."

After this short preface my uncle proceeded to relate a tale, every word of which inflamed my spirits, and raised all my passions in arms. I had heard something imperfectly of the state of my country; but my mother carefully kept me in ignorance, that my ambition might not be excited too soon, and that, when excited, it might be with the fullest effect. While I impatiently longed for an occasion of glory, I was far from apprehending, what I now found to be true, that the occasion which at this period presented itself, was such, that all the licence of fiction could scarcely have improved it.

The marquis de Villeroy described to me the league now subsisting against France. He revived in my memory by terms of the most fervent loyalty, the

the accomplishments and talents of my royal master. He spoke with aversion of the phlegmatic and crafty disposition of his imperial rival* ; and, with the language of glowing indignation, inveighed against the fickleness of the capricious Henry †. He described the train of disasters which had at length induced the king to take the field in person. He contrasted, with great effect, the story of the gallant chevalier Bayard, *the knight without fear and without reproach*, whose blood was still fresh in the plains of the Milanese; with that of the constable of Bourbon, the stain of chivalry, whom inglorious resentment and ungoverned ambition had urged to join the enemies of his country, in neglect of his loyalty and his oath. He stimulated me by the example of the one, and the infamy

* Charles V.

† Henry VIII.

of the other; and assured me that there never was an opportunity more favourable for acquiring immortal renown.

I wanted no prompter in a passion of this sort; and immediately set about collecting the whole force of my clients and retainers. I shook off the inglorious softness of my melancholy, and was all activity and animation. The lessons of my youth were now called into play. I judged it necessary to invite the assistance of some person of experience to assist me in marshalling my men; but I did much of what was to be done myself, and I did it well. It was my first employment in the morning; and the last that was witnessed by the setting sun. My excellent mother had left my revenues in the best order, and I spared no expence in the gratification of my favourite passion.

However

However eager I felt myself to take the field, the desire to appear in a manner worthy of a count de St. Leon restrained me; and I did not join the royal army till the Imperialists, having broken up the siege of Marseilles, and retreated with precipitation into Italy, the king had already crossed the Alps, entered the Milanese, and gained uncontested possession of the capital.

From Milan Francis proceeded to Pavia. Glory was the idol of his heart; and he was the more powerfully excited to the attack of that place, because it was the strongest and best fortified post in the whole duchy. The more he displayed of military prowess, the more firmly he believed he should fix himself in his newly acquired dominions; the inhabitants would submit to him the more willingly, and the enemy be less encouraged to enter into a fresh contention

for what he had acquired. Such at least were the motives that he assigned for his proceedings: in reality perhaps he was principally induced by the brilliancy which he conceived would attend on the undertaking.

It was a few weeks after the opening of the siege that I presented myself to my royal master. He received me with those winning and impressive manners by which he was so eminently distinguished. He recollected immediately all that had passed at our interview in the vale of Ardres, and warmly expressed the obligations which France had at various times owed to my ancestors. He spoke with earnest respect of the virtues and wisdom of my mother, and commended the resolution by which she had in former instances held me back from the public theatre. "Young gentleman," said the king, "I doubt not the gallantry of your spirit;

spirit; I see the impatience of a martial temper written in your face; I expect you to act in a manner worthy of your illustrious race, and of the instructions of a woman who deserved to be herself a pattern to all the matrons of France. Fear not that I shall suffer your accomplishments to rust in obscurity. I shall employ you. I shall assign you the post of danger and of renown. Fill it nobly; and from that hour I shall rank you in the catalogue of my chosen friends."

The siege of Pavia proved indeed to be a transaction, in the course of which military honour might well be acquired. It was defended by a small, but veteran garrison, and by one of the ablest captains that Europe at that time possessed*. He interrupted the approaches of the besiegers by frequent and furious sallies. In vain, by the

* Antonio de Leyva.

aid of our excellent artillery, did we make wide and repeated breaches in the fortifications. No sooner did we attempt to enter by the passage we had opened, than we found ourselves encountered by a body composed of the choicest and bravest soldiers of the garrison. The governor of the city, who, though grey-headed and advanced in years, was profuse of every youthful exertion, was ordinarily at the head of this body. If we deferred our attack, or, not having succeeded in it, proposed to commence it anew with the dawn of the following day, we were sure to find a new wall sprung up in the room of the other, as if by enchantment. Frequently the governor anticipated the success of our batteries, and the old fortification was no sooner demolished, than we beheld to our astonishment and mortification a new wall, which
his

his prudence and skill had erected at a small interval within the line of the former.

One of these attacks took place on the second day after my arrival at the camp of our sovereign. Every thing that I saw was new to me, and inflamed me with ardour. The noise of the cannon, which had preceded the attack, and which was now hushed; the inspiring sounds of martial music which succeeded that noise; the standards floating in the air; the firm and equal tread of the battalion that advanced; the armour of the knights; the rugged, resolute and intrepid countenances of the infantry; all swelled my soul with transport hitherto unexperienced. I had beheld the smoke of the artillery, in the midst of which every thing was lost and confounded; I had waited in awful suspense till the obscurity should be dissipated; I saw with pleasure and

C 6

surprise

surprise the ruin of the wall, and the wideness of the breach. All that had been recorded of the military feats of Christian valour seemed then to stand crowded in my busy brain; the generosity, the condescension, the kindness with which the king had addressed me the day before, urged me to treble exertion. I was in the foremost rank. We surmounted the ditch. We were resisted by a chosen body of Spaniards. The contention was obstinate; brave men; generous and enterprising spirits, fell on the one side and the other. I seized the cloth of a standard, as, in the playing of the wind, it was brought near to my hand. Between me and the Spaniard that held it there ensued an obstinate struggle. I watched my opportunity, and with my sword severed the flag from its staff. At this moment the trumpets of the king sounded a retreat. I had received two severe wounds,

wounds, one in the shoulder and the other in the thigh, in the contest. I felt myself faint with the loss of blood. A French officer of a rude appearance and gigantic stature, accosting me with the appellation of boy, commanded me to surrender the standard to him. I refused; and, to convince him I was in earnest, proceeded to wrap it round my body, and fastened it under my arm. Soon after I became insensible, and in this situation was accidentally found by my uncle and his companions, who immediately took me and my prize under their care. As soon as I was a little recovered of my wounds, the king seized an opportunity, after having bestowed loud commendations upon my gallantry, of conferring the honours of knighthood upon me in the face of the whole army.

While our tents were pitched under the walls of Pavia, I was continually
extending

extending the circle of my acquaintance among the young gentry of France, who, like myself, had attended their sovereign in this memorable expedition. I had some enemies, made such by the distinctions I obtained during the siege. But they were few; the greater part courted me the more, the more I showed myself worthy of their attachment. Envy is not a passion that finds easy root in a Frenchman's bosom. I was one of the youngest of those who attended on the siege; but my brothers in arms were generous rivals, who in the field obstinately strove with me for superior glory, but over the convivial board forgot their mutual competitions, and opened their hearts to benevolence and friendship. "Let us not," was a sentiment I heard often repeated, "forget the object that led us from our pleasant homes to pour from the heights of the Alps upon the fields of Italy. It is to humble the
imperious

imperious Spaniard, to punish the disloyal Bourbon, to vindicate the honour of our beloved and illustrious monarch. Those walls cover the enemy; yonder mountains serve to hide them from our assault; let no Frenchman mistake him who marches under the same standard for an adversary."

The trenches had not been opened before Pavia, till about the beginning of November. The winter overtook us, and the siege was yet in progress; with some apparent advantage indeed to our side of the question, but by no means promising an instant conclusion. The season set in with unusual severity; and both officer and soldier were glad, as much as possible, to fence out its rigour by the indulgences of the genial board. My finances, as I have said, were at the commencement of the expedition in excellent order; I had brought with me a considerable sum; and

and it was not spared upon the present occasion.

There were however other things to be attended to, beside the demands of conviviality. The king became impatient of the delays of the siege. The garrison and the inhabitants were reduced to great extremities; but the governor discovered no symptoms of a purpose to surrender. In the mean time intelligence was brought that Bourbon was making the most extraordinary exertions in Germany, and promised to bring to the enemy a reinforcement of twelve thousand men from that country, while the Imperial generals, by mortgaging their revenues, and pawning their jewels, and still more by their eloquence and influence with those under their command, were able to keep together the remains of a disheartened and defeated army in expectation of his arrival.

There

There was some danger therefore, if the siege were not speedily terminated, that the king might ultimately be obliged to raise it with ignominy, or to fight the enemy under every disadvantage. Francis however was not to be deterred from his undertaking. He swore a solemn oath, that Pavia should be his, or he would perish in the attempt.

Thus circumstanced, he conceived a very extraordinary project. Pavia is defended on one side by the Tesino, the scene of the first of the four famous battles by which Hannibal signalised his invasion of Italy. The king believed that if this river could by the labour of his army be diverted from its course, the town must instantly fall into his hands. He was encouraged to the undertaking, by recollecting a stratagem of a similar nature by which Cyrus formerly made himself master of
the

the city of Babylon. It was a thought highly flattering to the grandeur of his soul, to imagine that posterity would in this instance institute a parallel between him and Cyrus the Great.

The plan for diverting the course of the Tefino produced a new and extraordinary scene. It was, as may well be believed, a work of uncommon labour. A new channel was to be scooped out and deepened; and, while the stream was turned into this channel, piles were to be sunk, and an immense mound of earth created, as an effectual impediment to the waters resuming their former course. This was a heavy burthen to the soldier, in addition to the disadvantage of being encamped during the course of a winter, remarkably severe for the climate in which we fought. By any other army the task would have been performed with cloudiness and discontent, if not complained

plained of with repining and murmurs. But here the gaiety of the French character displayed itself. The nobility of France, who attended their sovereign in great numbers, accompanied the infantry in their labour. We laid aside the indulgence of the marquée, of tapestry and carpets; we threw off our upper garments; and each seized a spade, a barrow of earth, or a mattock. We put our hands to the engines, and refused no effort under pretence that it was fordid or severe. While the trees were leafless, and nature appeared bound up in frost, sweat ran down our faces and bedewed our limbs. The army were encouraged by our example. An employment which under other circumstances would have been regarded as rigid, was thus made a source of new hilarity and amusement. It was a memorable sight to behold the venerab'le and grey-headed

headed leaders of the French army endeavouring to exert the strength and activity of their early years. To me, who had but lately arrived at the stature of manhood, and who was accustomed to all the exercises which give strength and vigour to the frame, this new employment was in no degree burthenfome. I felt in it the satisfaction that a swift man experiences when he enters the lists of the race; I congratulated myself upon the nature of my education; if it be a sin to covet honour, that guilt was mine; and, so great was my appetite for it, that I was inexpressibly rejoiced to observe the various ways in which it might be gratified.

Strange as it may seem, this scene of a winter-camp, in the midst of blood and sweat, surrounded with dangers, and called on for unparalleled exertions, appears to me through the vista
of

of years that is now interposed between, to have been one of the happiest of my life. The gay labours and surprises of the day, were succeeded by a convivial evening in which we did not the less open our hearts, though frequently liable to be interrupted in our midnight revels by the inexhaustible activity and stratagems of the enemy. In this various and ever-shifting scene, I forgot the disasters that occurred, and the blood that flowed around me. All sense of a large and impartial morality was, for the time at least, deadened in my breast. I was ever upon the alert. The diversity of events neither suffered my spirits to flag, nor reflection to awake. It is only upon such occasions, or occasions like these, that a man is able fully to feel what life is, and to revel in its exuberance. Above all, I was delighted with the society and friendship of my brother-officers. They honoured

honoured me ; they loved me. I seemed to feel what sympathy was ; and to have conscious pleasure in making one in a race of beings like myself. Such were my sensations.

It must not however be imagined that all about me felt in these respects as I did. I was deeply indebted in this particular to my youth and my fortune. The old endeavoured to brace themselves in vain ; they sunk under the continual pressure. The poor foldier from the ranks laboured incessantly, and I laboured as much as he ; but he had little opportunity to recruit his vigour and renovate his strength. There was yet another class of persons in the camp, whose gaiety was much less uninterrupted than mine. These were the king and the generals who commanded under him. They could not be entirely devoid of thought and consideration. They suffered much anxiety

anxiety from the length of the siege ; and felt that every period of delay increased the doubtfulness of the event.

Antonio de Leyva, governor of the city, necessarily felt himself alarmed at the extraordinary project in which we were engaged, and made every exertion to prevent it. One evening the king sent for me to his tent, and told me in confidence that the enemy intended that very night to make three several attacks upon our mound, one on each side of the stream, and one by means of boats in the centre. Two of these, he said, were merely intended as feints ; the west bank of the Tefino was the point against which their principal exertions would be directed. On that side he was resolved to command in person ; the boats with which he proposed to resist their flota he confided to one of the most famous and valuable officers of his army ; the
detachment

detachment on the east bank he purposed to intrust to my uncle and myself. He observed that the detachment he could spare for that purpose, after having formed the other two bodies, and reserved a sufficient number for the defence of the camp and the works, would be small; and he warned me to the exertion of a particular vigilance. It would be doubly unfortunate, if a body, the attack upon which was to be merely a feigned one, should nevertheless be routed. Go, added he, fulfil my expectations; deport yourself answerably to the merit of your first atchievement; and depend upon it that you will prove hereafter one of the most eminent supporters of the martial glory of France.

The marquis de Villeroy divided our little force into two bodies: with the larger he lay in wait for the enemy near the scene of the expected attack;

the

the smaller he confided to my direction, and placed so that we might be able to fall upon the rear of the garri-fon-troops as soon as they should be fully engaged with our comrades. In the situation assigned me, I took advantage of the skirts of a wood, which enabled me to approach very near to the expected route of our assailants without being perceived by them. The night was extremely dark, yet the vicinity of my position was such that I could count the numbers of the adversary as they passed along before my hiding place. I was alarmed to find that they amounted to at least the triple of what we had been taught to expect. They were no sooner past, than I dispatched to the king a young knight, my particular friend, who happened to be with me, to urge the necessity of a reinforcement. At the same time I sent a messenger to my uncle, by a cir-

cuitous route, to inform him of what I had observed, and the step I had taken, and to intreat him to defer the attack as long as consistently with propriety it should be possible. The enemy however had no sooner arrived at the place of his destination, than the troops of the marquis, no longer capable of restraint, rushed to engage. The Spaniards were at first surprised, but a short time led them to suspect the weakness of their assailants, nor was the assistance I brought to my uncle sufficient to turn the fortune of the fight. We lost many of our men; the rest apparently gave ground; and it was a vain attempt amidst the darkness of the night, to endeavour to restore order and rally them to the assault. We were already almost completely overpowered, when the succours we expected reached us. They were however unable to distinguish friend from

from enemy. A storm of mingled rain and snow had come on, which benumbed our limbs, drove fiercely in our faces, and rendered every object alike viewless. The carnage which in this situation took place, was terrible. Our blows were struck at random. A Frenchman was not less dreadful than a Spaniard. When the battle ceased, scarcely one of the enemy was left alive; but we observed with astonishment and horror the number of the besiegers who had probably, in the midst of the confusion, been cut to pieces by their own countrymen.

I am now arrived at the period which put an end to the festivity and jocundness of the campaign. All after this was one continued series of disaster. About the close of January, our work, though not wholly interrupted, was considerably retarded by a succes-

sion of heavy rains. This was injurious to us in many ways; our project, which was executed in the midst of waters, rendered additional damp a matter of serious consideration. We were also seized with an apprehension of still greater magnitude, which was speedily realised. The snows being at length completely dissolved, and the quantity of water continually increasing, we perceived one afternoon strong symptoms that our mound, the principal subject of our labour and source of our hope, was giving way in various places. The next morning at day-break, it rushed down every where at once with wonderful violence and noise. It is difficult to describe the sensation of anguish which was instantly and universally diffused. The labour of many weeks was overthrown in a moment. As we had proceeded in our work, we every day saw ourselves near-

er

er the object to which we aspired. At this time our project was almost completed, and Pavia was in imagination already in our hands to gain possession of which had cost us such unremitted exertions, the display of so much gallantry, and the loss of so many soldiers. We were confounded at the catastrophe we saw. We gazed at each other, each in want of encouragement, and every one unable to afford it.

Still however we were not destitute of advantages. The garrison began to be in want both of ammunition and provisions. They were in a general state of discontent, almost of mutiny, which scarcely all the address and authority of the governor were able to suppress. If the town continued longer unrelieved, it was sure to fall into our hands. But even this our last hope was considerably diminished by the intelligence we received the very

day after the destruction of our mound, that the imperial army, after having received large reinforcements, was approaching in considerable force. The king had some time before, in the height of his confidence, and elation of his heart, sent off a detachment of six thousand men to invade the kingdom of Naples; for upon that, as well as the Milanese, he had inherited pretensions from his immediate predecessors.

But, though the enemy was superior in numbers, and a part perhaps of their forces better disciplined than ours, they laboured under several disadvantages to which we were not exposed. The emperor, though his dominions were more extensive, did not derive from them a revenue equal to that of Francis. As he did not take the field in person, the war appeared to his subjects only a common war, proceeding

proceeding upon the ordinary motives of war. But my countrymen were led by their sovereign, were fresh from the recent insolence of an invasion of their own territory, and fought at once for personal glory and their country's honour. The king who commanded them, seemed expressly formed to obtain their attachment and affection. His nobles became enthusiastic by the example of his enthusiasm, and willingly disbursed their revenues to give prosperity and eclat to the campaign.

The first question that arose upon the approach of the enemy, was, whether we should break up the siege, and attend in some strong post the flow, but sure, effect of their want of money, and the consequent dispersion of their troops, or wait their attack in our present posture. The former advice was safe; but to the gallant spirit of Francis it appeared ignominious. He was

upon all occasions the partisan of rapid measures and decisive proceedings; and his temper, with the exception of a few wary and deliberate counsellors, accorded with that of our whole army. For some days we congratulated ourselves upon the wisdom of our choice; we presented to the enemy so formidable an appearance, that, notwithstanding the cogent motives he had to proceed, he hesitated long before he ventured to attack us. At length however the day came, that was pregnant with so momentous expectation.

If through the whole limits of our camp there was not a man that did not feel himself roused upon this glorious occasion, to me it was especially interesting. The scene accorded with the whole purpose of my education, and novelty made it impressive. I lived only in the present moment. I
had

had not a thought, a wish, a straggling imagination, that wandered beyond the circuit of the day. My soul was filled; at one minute wild with expectation, and at another awed into solemnity. There is something indescribably delicious in this concentration of the mind. It raises a man above himself; and makes him feel a certain nobleness and elevation of character, of the possession of which he was to that hour unconscious. Fear and pain were ideas that could find no harbour in my bosom; I regarded this as the most memorable of days, and myself as the most fortunate of mortals. Far indeed was I from anticipating the disgraceful event, in which this elation of heart speedily terminated.

The sun rose bright in a cloudless sky. The cold of the season was such, as only to give new lightness and elasticity to the muscles and animal spirits.

I saw few of those objects of nature, which in this delightful climate give so sacred a pleasure to the human soul. But in my present temper there was no object of sight so ravishing, as the firm and equal steps of the martial bands, the impatience of the war-horse, and the display of military standards; nor any music so enchanting, as the shrillness of the pipe, the clangor of the trumpet, the neighing of steeds, and the roaring of cannon. It is thus that man disguises to himself the real nature of his occupation; and clothes that which is of all things most nefarious or most to be lamented, with the semblance of jubilee and festival.

The Imperialists were at first unable to withstand the efforts of French valour. They gave way on every side; we pursued our advantage with impetuosity. To the slaughter of whole ranks

ranks mowed down with tremendous celerity, to the agonies of the dying, I was blind; their groans had no effect on my organ, for my soul was occupied in another direction. My horse's heels spurned their mangled limbs, and were red with their blood. I fought not merely with valour, but with fury; I animated those around me by my example and my acclamations. It may seem contrary to delicacy to speak with this freedom of my own praises; but I am at my present writing totally changed and removed from what I was, and I write with the freedom of a general historian. It is this simplicity and ingenuofness that shall pervade the whole of my narrative.

The fortune of the day speedily changed. The cowardice and desertion of our Swiss allies, gave the first signal of adversity. The gallant commander of the garrison of Pavia, sallied

out in the midst of the fight, and suddenly attacked us in the rear. A stratagem of the Imperial general effected the route of our cavalry. The whole face of the field was utterly reversed.

It would be in vain for me to attempt to describe even the small part that I beheld of the calamity and slaughter of the French army. At this distance of time, the recollection of it opens afresh the almost obliterated wounds of my heart. I saw my friends cut down, and perish on every side. Those who, together with myself, had marched out in the morning, swelled with exultation and hope, now lay weltering in their blood. Their desires, their thoughts, their existence, were brought to a fatal termination. The common soldiers were hewed and cut to pieces by hundreds without note and observation. Many of the first nobility of France, made desperate by the
change

change of the battle, rushed into the thickest of the foe, and became so many voluntary sacrifices, chusing rather to perish than to turn their backs with dishonour.

In the battle I had two horses killed under me. The first of them suffered a sort of gradual destruction. He had already received one wound in the nostrils, and another in the neck, when a third shot carried away two of his feet, and laid him prostrate on the earth. Bernardin, my faithful attendant, observed what was passing, and immediately brought me a fresh charger; but I had not long mounted him, when he received a wound which killed him on the spot. I was myself hurt in several places, and at length the stroke of a sabre brought me to the ground. Here I remained for a long time insensible. When I recovered, and looked around me, I found myself in entire solitude,

solitude, and could at present perceive no trace either of the enemy or of my own people. Soon however I recollected what had passed, and was but too well assured of the defeat my countrymen had sustained. Weak and, battered as I was, I attempted to retire to a place of greater security. I had scarcely changed my ground, before I saw a trooper of the enemy rushing towards me with the intention to take away my life. Fortunately I observed a tree at hand, to the shelter of which I hastened; and, partly by moving the branches to and fro, and partly by shifting my position, I baffled my adversary, till he became weary of the attempt. A moment after, I saw one of my most intimate and familiar companions killed before my eyes. It was not long however before a party of fugitive French came up to the spot where I stood, and I, like the rest, was hurried

hurried from the field. My uncle perished in the battle.

It is wonderful how men can harden their hearts against such scenes as I then witnessed. It is wonderful how they can be brought to co-operate in such demoniac fury, and more than demoniac mischief, barbarity and murder. But they are brought to it; and enter, not from a deplorable necessity, but as to a festival, in which each man is eager to occupy his place, and share the amusements. It seemed to me at that time, as it seems to me now, that it should be enough for a man to contemplate such a field as I saw at Pavia, to induce him to abjure the trade of violence for ever, and to commit his sword once more to the bowels of the earth, from which it was torn for so nefarious a purpose.

These sensations, though now finally established in my mind, were at the
time

time of which I am writing but of fleeting duration. The force of education and the first bent of my mind, were too strong. The horror which overwhelmed me in the first moments of this great national defeat subsided; and the military passion returned upon me in its original ardour. My convictions, and the moral integrity of my soul, were temporary; and I became myself a monument of that inconstancy and that wonder, to which I have just alluded.

Various circumstances however prevented this passion from its direct operation. The character of France was altered by the battle of Pavia, though mine remained the same. It was in the fullest degree decisive of the fortune of the war. Milan, and every other place in the duchy, opened their gates to the conqueror: and, in a fortnight, not a Frenchman was left in the fields of Italy.

Italy. Of the whole army only a small body effected an orderly retreat, under the command of the duke of Alençon. Many persons of the highest distinction perished in the battle: many were made prisoners by the enemy. France by this event found the list of her noblesse considerably reduced in numbers; add to which, those whose loss she sustained, were almost all of them taken from among the most distinguished and meritorious in the catalogue.

But what constituted the principal feature in this memorable event, was that the king himself was found in the number of the prisoners; nor was he released by his ungenerous competitor till after more than a twelvemonth's confinement. During this period Francis tasted of the dregs of adversity. Inclined in the first instance to judge of his rival by himself, he expected a liberal treatment. In this he was
deeply

deeply disappointed. After a detention of many months in the Milanese, the scene of his former successes, he was transferred to Madrid. He was personally neglected by the emperor, while his disloyal subject * was treated with singular distinction. The most rigorous terms were proposed to him. All this had the effect, in one instance, of sinking him into a disease of languor and dejection which he was not expected to survive; and, in another, of inducing him to execute an instrument by which he abdicated the crown, and declared his resolution of remaining a prisoner for life. His confinement was at length terminated by his solemnly engaging to compulsory articles, which he was determined to break as soon as he found himself at liberty; an alternative peculiarly grating to the

* The constable of Bourbon.

liberality of his spirit. This reverse of fortune materially changed his character. The fine spirit of his ambition was from this time evaporated; and, while he still retained the indefeasible qualities of his soul, and was gallant, kind-hearted and generous, he bartered, as far as was compatible with his disposition, the enterprising and audacious temper he had previously manifested, for the wary and phlegmatic system of his more fortunate competitor. His genius cowered before that of Charles; and the defeat of Pavia may perhaps be considered as having given a deadly wound to the reign of chivalry, and a secure foundation to that of craft, dissimulation, corruption and commerce.

CHAP. III.

THE lists of military ambition then being closed, if not permanently, at least for a time, my mind took a new bias, and, without dismissing its most cherished and darling passion, pursued a path in the present emergency, to which the accidents of my youth had also guided me. If my mother had survived, she would probably, either not have consented to my serving at the siege of Pavia, or at least would have recalled me to the obscurity of my paternal chateau as soon as the campaign was at an end. I had not fully completed the twentieth year of my age, at the period of the memorable battle in which my sovereign was made prisoner. I was left

ft without adviser or guide; even the
marquis de Villeroy, my mother's
brother, of whatever consequence his
monitions to me might have proved,
was taken from me in this fatal en-
gagement. The king himself perhaps,
had it not been for the dreadful cala-
mities in which he was now involved,
might have condescended to interest
himself in some degree in my welfare.
In the course of events, I was left,
as a minor, and with an ample re-
venue at my disposition, to be wholly
guided by the suggestions of my own
mind.

In the portion of his reign already
elapsed, the splendid and interesting
qualities of Francis had given a new
impetus to the sentiments of the nation.
He was the most accomplished and
valiant prince of the time in which he
lived. There was but one of all the
monarchs of Christendom that could
cope

cope with him in power, the emperor Charles; and, as Charles's peculiarities were of a sort that Frenchmen were accustomed to regard with aversion and contempt, so there had not been a doubt among my compatriots, of the side upon which the superiority would ultimately rest. By the events of the day of Pavia they were confounded and overwhelmed. They did not despair of their country; they soon felt, and felt to its utmost extent, the rank which France held among the European states. But the chain of their ideas was interrupted; they could not but be conscious that the fortune of the kingdom had received a grievous check. The illustrious career which they had in fancy already traversed, was postponed to a distant period.

The consequences which flow from a suppressed ambition may easily be imagined. The nobility of France ex-

changed the activity of the field for the indulgences of the table: that concentrated spirit which had sought to expand itself upon the widest stage, now found vent in the exhibition of individual expence: and, above all, the sordid and inglorious passion for gaming, a vice eminently characteristic of the age, now especially gained strength, and drew multitudes into its destructive vortex. It was perhaps impossible for a young man to have entered the theatre of the world under less favourable auspices.

In what I have already written, I felt myself prompted to enlarge with complacency upon the sentiments and scenes of my youth; and I have yielded to the suggestion. The same internal admonition makes me shrink from entering with minuteness into the detail of my ruin. I recollect my infatuation with abhorrence; I fly from the
memory

memory with sensations inexpressibly painful; I regard it as a cloud that overshadowed and blackened for ever the fair prospects of my earlier years.

I shall not enumerate all my youthful companions, or all my youthful follies. I committed a mistake obvious enough, at this immature period of my existence, when I mistook profusion and extravagance for splendour and dignity; and the prudent economy which my mother had practised, served in the present instance as the pandar to my vices. The whole tendency of my education had been to inspire me with a proud and restless desire of distinction; and I was not content to play a second part in the career of my vices, as I should not have been content to play a second part in the genuine theatre of honour and fame. In all that was thoughtlessly spirited and gaily profligate I led the way to my companions,

peers, and was constantly held up by them as an example. By this conduct I incurred the censure of the rigorous and the old ; but the voice of censure reached me much seldomer than that of adulation. My person and demeanour were the topics of general applause. I was tall and well-proportioned ; my frame was slender and agile, but with an appearance of the fullest health ; my countenance was open, commanding and animated. My rank and situation in the world gave me confidence ; the fire and impetuosity of my temper rendered my gestures easy, rapid, expressive and graceful. The consequence of all this was to confirm me in a plan of life which I early laid down to myself, and from which I never in any instance deviated. I put aside those rules as splenetic and hypercritical, which confessors preach, and with which the preceptors of young

men are accustomed to weary and alienate the minds of their pupils. The charge of being disorderly and unthinking I despised; that of imprudence, even when meant for blame, founded in my ear like the voice of encomium. But, accustomed from education to sentiments of honour, and from habit to the language of eulogy, it is difficult for any man to be more firmly bent than I was to incur no breath of dishonour, or to draw the line more peremptorily, between the follies of youth, and the aberrations of a gross and unprincipled spirit.

It may be alleged indeed, and with considerable justice, that the habit of gaming is an exception to this statement. It was with hesitation and reluctance that I entered into this habit. I saw it as it was, and as every ingenuous and undebauched mind must see it, base and fordid. The possession

sion of some degree of wealth I regarded indeed as indispensable to a man who would fill a lofty and respectable character in the world, a character that, by uniting the advantages of exterior appearance with the actions of a hero, should extort the homage of his species. But, in the picture I drew of this man in my mind, I considered wealth as an accident, the attendant on his birth, to be dispensed with dignity, not to be adverted to with minuteness of attention. Deep play is certainly sufficiently inconsistent with this character. The direct purpose of the gamester is to transfer money from the pocket of his neighbour into his own. He rouses his sleepy and wearied attention by the most sordid of all motives. The fear of losing pierces his heart with anguish; and to gain, to obtain an advantage for himself, which can scarcely exceed, and which seldom equals, the

injury his competitor suffers, is the circumstance which most transports his heart with delight. For this he watches; for this he calculates. An honourable gamester does not seize with premeditation the moment when his adversary is deprived, by wine or any other cause, of his usual self-possession. He does not seek with sly malice to play upon his passions. He does not enter with avidity into the contest with an unpractised, but presuming rival. But he cannot avoid rejoicing, when he finds that accident has given him an unusual advantage. I have often thought that I could better understand how a man of honour could reconcile himself to the accursed and murderous trade of war, than to the system of the gaming-table. In war he fights with a stranger, a man with whom he has no habits of kindness, and who is fairly apprised that he comes against him with ruinous

ruinous intent. But in play he robs perhaps his brother, his friend, the partner of his bosom; or, in every event, a man seduced into the snare with all the arts of courtesy, and whom he smiles upon, even while he stabs.

I am talking here the mere reason and common sense of the question as it relates to mankind in general. But it is with other feelings that I reflect upon the concern I have myself individually in the subject. Years roll on in vain; ages themselves are useless here; looking forward, as I do, to an existence that shall endure till time shall be no more; no time can wipe away the remembrance of the bitter anguish that I have endured, the consequence of gaming. It is torture! It is madness! Poverty, I have drained thy cup to the dregs! I have seen my wife and my children looking to me in vain for bread! Which is the most

intolerable distress? That of the period, in which all the comforts of life gradually left me; in which I caught at every fragment of promise, and every fragment failed; in which I rose every morning to pamper myself with empty delusions; in which I ate the apples of purgatory, fair without, but within bitterness and ashes; in which I tossed, through endless, fruitless nights, upon the couch of disappointment and despair? Or the period, when at length all my hopes were at an end; when I fled with horror to a foreign climate; when my family, that should have been my comfort, gave me my most poignant agony; when I looked upon them, naked, destitute and exiles, with the tremendous thought, what and who it was that had caused their ruin? Adversity, without consolation, adversity, when its sting is remorse, self-abhorrence and self-contempt,—hell has no
misery

misery by which it can be thrown into shade or exceeded !

Why do I dwell upon, or at least why do I anticipate, this detested circumstance of my story ? Let me add one remark in this place, and pass on to the other particulars of this epoch of my prodigality. It is true, I must take this shameful appellation to myself—I was a gamester. But, in the beginning, I took no concern in that species of science which is often implied in the appellation. My games were games of hazard, not of skill. It appeared to my distempered apprehension, to be only a mode in which for a man to display his fortitude and philosophy. I was flattered with the practice of gaming, because I saw in it, when gracefully pursued, the magnanimity of the Stoic, combined with the manners of a man of the world ; a magnanimity that no success is able to

intoxicate, and no vicissitude to subvert. I committed my property to the hazard of the die; and I placed my ambition in laughing alike at the favours of fortune, and her frowns. In the sequel however I found myself deceived. The fickle goddess sufficiently proved that she had the power of making me serious. But in her most tremendous reverses I was never influenced to do any thing that the most scrupulous gamester regards as dishonourable. I say not this for the purpose of giving colour and speciousness to my tale. I say it, because I have laid it down to myself in this narrative as a sacred principle, to relate the simple, unaltered truth.

Another characteristic of the reign of Francis the First, is its gallantries. It is well known how much the king was himself occupied with attachments of this sort; his government was rather
the

the government of women than of politicians; and the manners of the sovereign strongly tended to fix the habits of his subjects. A very young man rather takes the tone of his passions from those about him, than forms one that is properly his own; and this was my case in the present instance as well as in the preceding. Originally of an amorous constitution, I should perhaps have quieted the restlessness of my appetites without ostentation and eclat, had not the conduct of my youthful associates in general led me to regard gallantry as an accomplishment indispensibly necessary in a young man of rank. It must be confessed indeed that this offence against the rigour of discipline has a thousand advantages over that of gaming. Few women of regular and reputable lives, have that ease of manners, that flow of fancy, and that graceful intrepidity

E 5 of

of thinking and expressing themselves, that is sometimes to be found among those who have discharged themselves from the tyranny of custom. There is something irresistibly captivating in that voluptuousness which, while it assumes a certain air of freedom, uniformly and with preference conforms itself to the dictates of unsophisticated delicacy. A judicious and limited voluptuousness, is necessary to the cultivation of the mind, to the polishing of the manners, to the refining of sentiment, and the development of the understanding; and a woman deficient in this respect, may be of use for the government of our families, but can neither add to the enjoyments, nor fix the partiality, of a man of animation and taste.

But, whatever there may be in these considerations, certain it is, that the conduct

conduct I pursued in matters of gallantry, led me into great and serious expences. The mistresses, with whom I chanced to associate, had neither the inexpressible captivation of madame de Chateaubriant*, nor the aspiring and impressive manners of the dutchess d' Etampes†. They had however beauty and vivacity, frolic without rudeness, and softness without timidity. They had paid some regard to points of knowledge and taste, considering these as additional means for fixing the partiality of their paramours, and knowing that they had no security for the permanence of their prosperity but in the variety of their attractions. In their society I was led into new trains of reflection, a nicer consideration of human passion and the varieties of human character, and, above all, into a

* † Mistresses of Francis I.

greater quickness and delicacy in matter of intellectual taste. My hours, for the most part, rolled swiftly and easily away, sometimes in the society of the young, the gay and the ambitious of my own sex, and sometimes in the softer and more delicious intercourse of the fair. I lived in the midst of all that Paris could at that time furnish of splendid and luxurious. This system of living was calculated to lull me in pleasing dreams, and to waste away existence in delirious softness. It sufficiently accorded with the sad period of our sovereign's captivity, when my young compatriots sought to drown the sense of public and patriotic considerations in copious draughts of pleasure; nor did the monarch's return immediately restore to France her former haughtiness and pride.

The course of sensuality in which I was now engaged, though it did not
abso-

absolutely sink into grossness, may well be supposed to have trodden upon the very edge of licence. I and my companions were young; we were made fearless and presuming by fortune and by rank; we had laid aside those more rigorous restraints which render the soberer part of mankind plausible and decent, by making them timid and trite. I will not contaminate the minds of my innocent and inexperienced readers by entering into the detail of the follies in which I engaged.

One thing it is necessary to remark as essential to the main thread of my story. My expences of all kinds, during this period of self-desertion, drained my resources, but did not tarnish my good name. My excesses were regarded by some as ornamental and becoming, but by all were admitted as venial. The laurels I had won in the field of military honour were not obscured by my subsequent

quent conduct. I was universally ranked among the most promising and honourable of the young noblemen of France. I had some rivals ; I did not pass through this turbulent and diversified scene without disputes ; but no one cast a reflection upon my name, no one ventured to speak of me with superciliousness and opprobrium. Nor was my temper more injured than my reputation. From every dispute I extricated myself with grace and propriety ; I studied the pleasure and ease of all with whom I associated ; and no man enjoyed more extensively than I did the sweets of friendship, as far as the sweets of friendship can be extensively enjoyed.

CHAP. IV.

I HAD been now two years in habits of life and a mode of expence extremely injurious to my patrimony, when a circumstance occurred, which promised completely to deliver me from the ruinous consequences of my own folly. This was no other than my encounter with that incomparable woman, who afterwards became the partner of my life, and the mother of my children. I cannot even now recollect her without tears: the sentiment which her very name excites in my mind, is a mingled feeling, on the one hand, of the most exquisite and unspeakable delight, a feeling that elevates and expands and electrifies my throbbing heart; and, on the other, of the

the bitterest anguish and regret.—I must develop the source of this feeling.

Marguerite Louise Isabeau de Damville was, at the period of our first meeting, in the nineteenth year of her age. Her complexion was of the most perfect transparency, her eyes black and sparkling, and her eyebrows dark and long. Such were the perfect smoothness and clearness of her skin, that at nineteen she appeared five years younger than she was, and she long retained this extreme juvenility of form. Her step was airy and light as that of a young fawn, yet at the same time firm, and indicative of strength of body and vigour of mind. Her voice, like the whole of her external appearance, was expressive of undefining, I had almost said childish, simplicity. Yet, with all this playfulness of appearance, her understanding was bold and

and correct. Her mind was well furnished with every thing that could add to her accomplishments as a wife or a mother. Her indulgent parents had procured her every advantage of education, and circumstances had been uncommonly favourable to her improvement. She was encouraged and assisted in the art of drawing, for which she discovered a very early talent, by Leonardo da Vinci; and she formed her poetical taste from the conversation and instructions of Clement Marot. But, amidst the singular assemblage of her intellectual accomplishments, there was nothing by which she was so much distinguished, as the uncommon prudence of her judgments, and the unalterable amiableness of her manners. This was the woman destined to crown my happiness, and consummate my misery. If I had never known her, I should never have tasted true pleasure;

ture ; if I had been guided by her counsels, I should not have drained to the very dregs the cup of anguish.

The house of her father, the marquis de Damville, was the resort of all the most eminent wits and scholars of that period, particularly of Marot, Rabelais, Erasmus and Scaliger. This was my first inducement to frequent it. My education had inspired me with an inextinguishable love of literature ; and the dissipation in which I was at this time involved, could not entirely interrupt the propensity. The most thoughtless and extravagant period of my life had occasional intervals of study and reflection ; and the gay, animated and ingenious conversation of the men I have mentioned, had always peculiar charms for me.

I had continued for some time to visit at the marquis's hotel, before I encountered the beautiful Marguerite.

The

The first time I saw her, she made a deep impression upon me. The marquis, who was one of the most benevolent and enlightened of mankind, had been led by my character and manners to conceive a warm friendship for me. He saw the ruin in which I was heedlessly involving myself, and believed that it was not yet too late to save me. As he thought that there was no method so likely to effect my reformation as the interposition of domestic affections, he was not unwilling to encourage the attachment I began to feel for his daughter. On my part I wanted but little encouragement. I no sooner observed her manners, and became acquainted with her merits, than my heart was unalterably fixed. I became as it were a new man. I was like one, who, after his eyes had grown imperceptibly dim, till at length every object appeared indistinct and of a gloomy general

general hue, has his sight instantaneously restored, and beholds the fabric of the universe in its genuine clearness, brilliancy and truth. I was astonished at my own folly that I could so long have found gratification in pleasures mean and sensual. I was ashamed of my own degradation. I could not endure the comparison between the showy, unsubstantial attractions of the women I had hitherto frequented, and the charms of the adorable Marguerite. The purity of her mind seemed to give a celestial brilliancy and softness to the beauties of her person. The gross and brutal pursuits of the debauchee are often indeed described by the same epithets as the virtuous and refined passion with which I was now for the first time inspired; but experience convinced me that they differed in their most essential features.

The

The marquis saw the state of my mind, and addressed me thus. Count, said he, I feel the most ardent friendship for you. I am inexpressibly concerned for your welfare. You will be convinced of this, when I have furnished you with the clue to my late conduct towards you. I regard you, if not, as a ruined man, at least as a man in the high road to ruin. Your present habits are of the most dangerous sort; they appear to you perfectly conformable to principles of the strictest honour; nay, they come recommended to you by a certain eclat and dignity with which they seem to be surrounded. I could say to you, Recollect yourself. Be not misled by delusive appearances. Consider the present state of your fortune, and the state in which your mother left it. You cannot be ignorant how greatly it is impaired. How has this circumstance

stance arisen; Have your revenues been expended in the service of your country? Have you purchased any thing by them that will confer on you lasting renown? Put together the sum of actions, which, piece by piece, you have been willing to regard as indifferent and innocent, if not as graceful and becoming. You cannot but be struck with their monstrous deformity. Is it possible that you can be ignorant of the nature of poverty? There is such a thing as honourable poverty. The poverty of Cincinnatus was honourable, who impoverished himself by paying the fine which was factiously imposed on his son, and then was contented to pass his time alternately between the highest situations and the most rigid simplicity. The poverty of a man of genius, such as Rabelais, if not honourable, is interesting, when we compare his merits and worth

worth with that of many of those persons upon whom fortune has blindly lavished her favours. It is honourable, if he have declined the means of enriching himself by the sacrifice of his independence and his principles. But of all earthly things the most contemptible, is the man who, having wasted his goods in riotous living, yet hungers after the luxuries that have proved his bane, and feasts himself upon the steam of dainties of which he has lost the substance. Poverty, always sufficiently disadvantageous in a degenerate age, where attention and courtship are doled forth with scales of gold, is tremendous to him. He is the scorn of all mankind. Wherever he is a guest, he is invited only to be trampled upon and insulted. He is capable of nothing, and is a burthen to society and mankind. The helplessness of age advances upon him with stealing steps, and

and he is destined to gather all its miseries and none of its consolations.

I might have talked to you thus, but I refused it. I apprehend something of the nature of advice. I know that it can seldom be attended with its genuine effect, and will never be received with deference and pleasure, where its motives are capable of misconstruction. If I had talked to you thus, I might have appeared to be indulging the tyranny of age; I might have seemed to assume an unbecoming air of superiority and command: it could not have been clear that I was honestly interested in that, about which I affected so much concern. I doubt not the ingenuousness of your nature. I doubt not that you would have been struck with the picture. But I must be permitted to doubt the adequate and lasting effect of my expostulation. I was not willing by my forwardness
and

and loquacity to wear out one of the great springs of human improvement.

I have determined on your reform. For that purpose I think it necessary to combine my remonstrances and advice, with a change of your habits and situation. You have tasted largely of what are commonly called the pleasures of life, but there are pleasures that you have not tasted. At this moment you anticipate them, and anticipate them with the ardour of a lover. But you know not yet all the gratifications that attend upon domestic affections.

I am willing to bestow upon you my daughter. I consent to prove the purity of my advice, and the sincerity of my regard, by committing her happiness to the risk. She is a treasure, the equal of which perhaps the world does not hold. I speak not of her personal attractions. But in understanding,

accomplishments and virtue, I firmly believe, no woman living can compare with her. In possessing her, you will be blessed beyond the lot of princes. But, at the same time that I shall thus put happiness within your grasp, remember that I commit to your disposal the happiness of Marguerite. You are a worthy and an honourable man ; your talents and your virtues will constitute her felicity. Her portion will redeem the injury which your patrimony has suffered from your excesses, and you will have enough for yourselves, and for your mutual offspring. I cannot believe, that, with such a deposit intrusted to you, you will consent to bring her to misery and ruin.

I have one condition however to stipulate with you. I require of you as the pledge of her happiness, that you break off your present modes of life, that you separate yourself from your connections,

connections, and retire into the country upon your paternal estate. You are yet too young to be in danger from that tyranny of custom, which often renders men more advanced in life incapable of relishing the simple and genuine pleasures. You will find contentment and joy in the society of my daughter, and in the bosom of your rising family. You will be happy in the circle of your own hearth, and have little to ask of the rest of mankind. If, in any ill-omened and inauspicious moment, the allurements of your present vices (forgive the plainness of my speech) should resume their power over you, I hope at least that I shall never live to see it; that I shall not be taught by bitter experience, that I have sacrificed to the disinterestedness of my friendship the happiness of my daughter and of my posterity!

My heart weeps blood, while I record the admonitions of this noble and generous man. A nobler France did not contain through all her boundaries! Refined by literature, polished by the best society his age could afford, grown grey in the field of honour, and particularly distinguished by the personal attachment and confidence of his sovereign! What was all this advice to me! What return did I make to this unparalleled kindness and friendship! I ruined this admirable woman! I involved her in poverty and shame! With the most savage barbarity I prepared for her an immature grave! Can I forget this! Of what avail to me are immortal life and immortal youth? Oh, Marguerite, Marguerite! For ever thy image haunts me! For ever thy ghost upbraids me! How little have I proved myself worthy of such a partner! Rather what punishment,
what

what plagues, what shame and detestation have I not deserved! Praised be Heaven! the last prayer of the marquis of Damville at least was granted! He did not live to witness my relapse, my profligacy and insanity!

I resume the thread of my story.— I listened to the address of the marquis with reverence and admiration. I accepted his conditions with joy. I married his adorable daughter, and conducted her to my paternal estate in the Bourdelois. Now only it was that I tasted of perfect happiness. To judge from my own experience in this situation, I should say, that nature has atoned for all the disasters and miseries she so copiously and incessantly pours upon her sons, by this one gift, the transcendant enjoyment and nameless delights which, wherever the heart is pure and the soul is refined, wait on the attachment of two persons of opposite

F 3

posite sexes. My beloved Marguerite guided and directed me, at the same time that she was ever studying my gratification. I instructed her by my experience, while she enlightened me by the rectitude and decision of her taste. Ours was a sober and dignified happiness, and its very sobriety served to give it additional voluptuousness. We had each our separate pursuits, whether for the cultivation of our minds, or the promotion of our mutual interests. Separation gave us respectability in each other's eyes, while it prepared us to enter with fresh ardour into society and conversation. In company with each other, hours passed over us, and appeared but minutes. It has been said to be a peculiar felicity for any one to be praised by a man who is himself eminently a subject of praise: how much happier to be prized and loved by a person
worthy

worthy of love? A man may be prized and valued by his friend; but in how different a style of sentiment from the regard and attachment that may reign in the bosom of his mistress or his wife? Self-complacency and self-satisfaction may perhaps be numbered among the principal sources of contentment. It is necessary for him who would endure existence with patience, that he should conceive himself to be something, that he should be persuaded he is not a cypher in the muster-roll of man. How bitter is the anguish we are sometimes doomed to sustain in this respect from the marks we receive of other men's indifference and contempt? To feel that we are loved by one whose love we have deserved, to be employed in the mutual interchange of the marks of this love, habitually to study the happiness of one by whom our happiness is studied in return, this

is the most desirable, as it is the genuine and unadulterated condition of human nature. I must have some one to sympathise with ; I cannot bear to be cut off from all relations ; I desire to experience a confidence, a concord, an attachment, that cannot rise between common acquaintance. In every state we long for some fond bosom on which to rest our weary head, some speaking eye with which to exchange the glances of intelligence and affection. Then the soul warms and expands itself ; then it shuns the observation of every other beholder ; then it melts with feelings that are inexpressible, but that the heart understands without the aid of words ; then the eyes swim with rapture ; then the frame languishes with enjoyment ; then the soul burns with fire ; then the two persons thus blest, are no longer two, distance vanishes, one thought animates,

animates, one mind informs them. Thus love acts; thus it is ripened to perfection; never does man feel himself so much alive, so truly etherial, as when, bursting the bonds of diffidence, uncertainty and reserve, he pours himself entire into the bosom of the woman he adores.

Marguerite de Damville was particularly distinguished from every other woman I ever knew by the justness of her taste and the vividness of her feelings. This circumstance was a fund of inexhaustible delight and improvement to me. We were both of us well acquainted with the most eminent poets and fine writers of modern times. But, when we came to read them together, they presented themselves in a point of view in which they had never been seen by us before. It is perhaps more important that poetry and every thing that excites the imagination

gination or appeals to the heart, should be read in solitude than in society. But the true way to understand our author in these cases, is to employ each of these modes in succession. The terrible, the majestic, the voluptuous and the melting, are all of them in a considerable degree affairs of sympathy, and we never judge of them so infallibly or with so much satisfaction, as when, in the presence of each other, the emotion is kindled in either bosom at the same instant, the eye-beams, pregnant with sentiment and meaning, involuntarily meet and mingle, the voice of the reader becomes modulated by the ideas of his author, and that of the hearer, by an accidental interjection of momentary comment or applause, confesses its accord. It was in this manner that we read together the admirable sonnets of Petrarch, and passed in review the sublime effusions
of

of Dante. The letters of Eloisa to Abelard afforded us singular delight. We searched into the effusions of the Troubadours, and, among all their absurdities and inequality, we found a wildness, a daring pouring forth of the soul, an unpruned richness of imagination, and from time to time a grandeur of conception and audacious eccentricity of thought, that filled us with unlooked for transport. At other times, when not regularly engaged in this species of reading, we would repeat passages to each other, communicate the discoveries of this sort that either had made in solitude, and point out unobserved beauties, that perhaps neither of us would have remarked, but for the suggestions of the other. It is impossible for two persons to be constituted so much alike, but that one of them should have a more genuine and instantaneous relish for one sort of excellence,

cellence, and another for another. Thus we added to each other's stores, and acquired a largeness of conception and liberality of judgment that neither of us would have arrived at, if separate. It is difficult to imagine how prolific this kind of amusement proved of true happiness. We were mutually delighted to remark the accord of our feelings, and still more so, as we perceived that accord to be hourly increasing, and what struck either as a blemish in the other, wearing out and disappearing. We were also led by the same means to advert to the powers of mind existing in each, the rectitude of judgment and delicacy of feeling. As our attachment hourly increased, we rejoiced in this reciprocation of benefits, while each gave or received something that added to value of mind and worth of character. Mutual esteem was incessantly kept alive, and mutual esteem

esteem is the only substantial basis of love. Each of us hourly blessed our common lot, while each believed it impracticable elsewhere to have found so much worth blended with so much sweetness.

But we did not confine ourselves to the library and fire-side. We walked, we rode, we travelled together. We observed together the beauties of nature, and the system of the universe. We traversed many provinces of France, and some parts of Italy and Spain. We examined the characters of mankind, as they are modified by the varieties of natural descent, or the diversities of political government. In all this we found peculiar gratification. There is something in the scent and impression of a balmy atmosphere, in the lustre of sunshine, in the azure heaven and the purple clouds, in the opening of prospects on this side and on that, in the contemplation of verdure and fertility

fertility and industry and simplicity and cheerfulness in all their variations, in the very act and exercise of travelling, peculiarly congenial to the human frame. It expands the heart, it makes the spirit dance, and exquisitely disposes us for social enjoyment. The mind becomes more elevated and refined, it assumes a microscopical and unwonted sensibility, it feels things which in ordinary moments are unheeded and unknown, it enjoys things too evanescent for a name and too minute to be arrested, it trembles with pleasure through every fibre and every articulation.

One thing is necessary to be mentioned in this place, though, while it adds to the fidelity of delineation, I am aware it breaks the tone of feeling and the harmony of the picture. But it is not my intention in this history to pass myself for better than I am. I have laid down to myself the sacred
maxim

maxim of absolute truth and impartiality. I must confess therefore, with whatever anguish, my extreme inferiority to my incomparable partner. She had all the simplicity of genuine taste. The more she delivered herself up to nature, the greater was her content. All superfluous appendages and show appeared to her as so many obstacles to enjoyment. She derived her happiness from the tone of her own mind, and stood in no need of the gaping admiration and stupid wonder of others to make her feel herself happy. But I retained the original vice of my mind. The gestures of worship, and the voice of applause were necessary to me. I did not suffice to myself. I was not satisfied with the tranquil and inglorious fruition of genuine pleasures, forgetting the vain and anxious tumult of the world, and forgotten by those who figured on its theatre.

theatre. It may be, that Marguerite could, and ought by insensible degrees, to have rooted out this disease of my mind. But I am concerned only with the statement of facts; and I know that no such thing was the effect of our intercourse,

This absurd passion did not however at this time lead me to any fatal extremities. It contented itself with the frivolous gratification resulting from a certain portion of ostentation and expence. I maintained a considerable train of servants. My apartments were magnificent, and my furniture splendid. When we travelled, it was with an attendance little short of princely. Idiot that I was, to regard this as an addition to the genuine pleasures which I have above enumerated! When we were at home, every accidental guest was received and entertained with extraordinary pomp, a pomp not directed
to

to add to his accommodation, but that was designed to leave him impressed with astonishment and admiration at the spirit of his host. Often indeed did I feel this ostentation an incumbrance. Often did I languish for the ease and freedom which result from a mediocrity of circumstances. But this I called, doing honour to my ancestors and my country, and vindicating the consideration due to the house of St. Leon.

To quit this painful recollection.— A circumstance which tended at this time to fill the measure of my happiness, consisted in the dear pledges which Marguerite bore me of our mutual affection. It is impossible for him who has not experienced it, to conceive the accumulation which a genuine tenderness derives from this source. The difficulties are many, that attend upon pregnancy; trifles are at that period
sources

sources of fatigue and injury; it is necessary that the person should be protected, and the mind tranquil. We love to watch over a delicate plant, that appears to call for all our anxiety and attention. There is in this case the sentiment, without the repulsive circumstances, that attends upon our sympathy with a dangerous and alarming disease. Marguerite, by her sensibility and growing attachment, abundantly rewarded my cares. At length the critical period arrives, when an event so extraordinary occurs, as cannot fail to put the human frame in considerable jeopardy. Never shall I forget the interview between us immediately subsequent to her first parturition, the effusion of soul with which we met each other after all danger seemed to have subsided, the kindness which animated us, increased as it was by ideas of peril and suffering, the sacred sensation

sensation with which the mother presented her infant to her husband, or the complacency with which we read in each other's eyes a common sentiment of melting tenderness and inviolable attachment !

This, she seemed to say, is the joint result of our common affection. It partakes equally of both, and is the shrine in which our sympathies and our life have been poured together, never to be separated. Let other lovers testify their engagements by presents and tokens ; we record and stamp our attachment in this precious creature, a creature of that species which is more admirable than any thing else the world has to boast, a creature susceptible of pleasure and pain, of affection and love, of sentiment and fancy, of wisdom and virtue. This creature will daily stand in need of an aid we shall delight to afford ; will require our meditations and exertions

tions to forward its improvement, and confirm its merits and its worth. We shall each blend our exertions for that purpose, and our union, confirmed by this common object of our labour and affection, will every day become more sacred and indissoluble.—All this the present weakness of my beloved Marguerite would not allow her to say. But all this occurred to my reflections; and, when we had time tranquilly to compare our recollection of the event, it plainly appeared that in all this our hearts and conceptions had most truly sympathised.

The possessing a third object, a common centre of anxiety to both, is far from weakening the regard of such a couple for each other. It does not separate or divert them; it is a new link of connection. Each is attached to it the more for the sake of either; each regards it as a sort of branch or
scion,

scion, representing the parent; each rejoices in its health, its good humour, its smiles, its increase in size, in strength and in faculties, principally from the idea of the gratification they will communicate to the other. Were it not for this idea, were it possible the pleasure should not be mutual, the sentiment would be stripped of its principal elevation and refinement; it would be comparatively cold, selfish, solitary and inane.

In the first ten years of our marriage my wife brought me five children, two sons and three daughters. The second son only died in his infancy. My predominant passion at this time was that of domestic pleasures and employments, and I devoted myself, jointly with the mother, to the cultivation of the minds of my children. They all in a considerable degree rewarded our care; they were all amiable. Taught by the
example

example of their parents, they lived in uncommon harmony and affection. Charles, the eldest, was a lad of a bold and active disposition; but the sentiments of virtue and honour that were infused into him both by Marguerite and myself, found a favourable reception, and promised to render those qualities, which, if left to themselves might have been turbulent and dangerous, productive of the happiest consequences. Julia, his eldest sister, was uncommonly mild and affectionate, alive to the slightest variations of treatment, profoundly depressed by every mark of unkindness, but exquisitely sensible to demonstrations of sympathy and attachment. She appeared little formed to struggle with the difficulties of life and the frowns of the world; but, in periods of quietness and tranquillity, nothing could exceed the sweetness of her character and the
fascination

fascination of her manners. Her chief attachment was to her mother, though she was by no means capable of her mother's active beneficence and heroic fortitude. Louisa, the second daughter, resembled her mother in person, and promised to resemble her in character. Marguerite, the youngest, differed from the whole family, in the playfulness and frolic of her disposition. Her vivacity was inexhaustible, and was continually displaying itself in innocent tricks, and smart, unexpected sallies. Nothing could possibly be more ingenuous than this admirable infant; nothing more kind, considerate and enthusiastic in her tenderness and grief, when an occasion occurred to call forth these sentiments. But, the moment the sorrowful occasion was over, she would resume all her vivacity; and even sometimes, in the midst of her tears, some trait of her native humour

1

humour would escape. I know not whether all the family were not more attached to the little Marguerite than to any other individual member, as she certainly oftenest contributed to their amusement and pleasure.—Such was the amiable circle, one and all of whom have been involved by me in the most tremendous ruin and disgrace.

CHAP. V.

CHARLES was now nine years of age. His mother and myself had delighted ourselves with observing and forwarding the opening of his infant mind, and had hitherto been contented with the assistance of a neighbouring priest by way of preceptor. But, as he was our only son, we were desirous that he should obtain every advantage of education. We were neither of us illiterate ; but, in the course of twenty-three years, which had elapsed since I was myself of Charles's age, the progress of literature and the literary passion in Europe had been astonishingly great, and I was anxious that he should realise in his own person every benefit

VOL. I. G which

which the fortunate and illustrious period of human affairs in which he began to exist, seemed to hold out to him. Beside, there was an impetuosity and forwardness in his character, that seemed ill to brook the profound solitude and retirement in which his mother and I were contented to live. His case demanded companions of his own age, a little world of fellow-beings, with whom he might engage in their petty business and cares, with whose passions his own might jostle or might sympathise, who might kindle his emulation, and open to him the field of fraternal associations and amity.

There was however a considerable difficulty attendant on this question. The schools of real literature in France, where languages were properly taught, and science might be acquired, were at this time exceedingly few. The nearest

est university was that of Toulouse, at the distance of twenty-six leagues. This was, practically speaking, as far from us as Paris itself. Was then our darling child, to be torn from his parents, from all he was accustomed to see, and all by whom he was loved, to be planted in the midst of strangers, to have his mind excited to observation, and the spirit of generous contention roused, at the risque of suppressing the tender affections of his soul, and the sentiments of duty, reliance and love? There seemed however to be no alternative. It was necessary that a temporary separation should take place. Intellectual improvement was a point by all means to be pursued; and we must direct our efforts to keep alive along with it, those winning qualities, and that softness of heart, which had hitherto rendered Charles so eminently our delight.

delight. Such were our fond speculations and projects for the future.

It was at length determined that I should proceed along with him to Paris. I could there observe upon the spot the state of the university, and the means of learning that existed in the metropolis; and could consult with some of those eminent luminaries with whom I had become acquainted at the house of the marquis de Damville. Marguerite declined accompanying me upon this occasion. Her father was dead; she could not think of quitting her daughters for any considerable time; and our nuptial engagement of residing always in the country, gave her a repugnance to the removing with her whole family to Paris. It was left probable that she might come to me when the business was settled, if at that time it was determined to leave her son at the capital; and

and that she might then reconduct me to the place, which had been the scene of all my happiness, but which I was destined never to revisit in peace.

Preliminaries being at length fully adjusted in the manner that appeared suitable to the importance of the occasion, I set off for the metropolis of my country, which I had seen only once, and that for a very short period, in the course of ten years. That visit had been produced by a very melancholy circumstance, the death of the marquis de Damville. Marguerite and myself had then been summoned, and arrived at his hotel but a few days before he expired. Though extremely weakened by the mortal disease under which he laboured, he retained all the faculties of his mind, and conversed with us in the most affectionate and endearing terms. He congratulated us upon our mutual felicity; nor could the situation

in which we found him, upon the brink of an everlasting oblivion of all earthly things, abate the sincerity and fervour of his delight. He thanked me for my carriage and conduct as a husband, which, he said, might with propriety he held up as a model to the human species. He applauded himself for that mingled discernment and determination, which, as he affirmed, had so opportunely secured my virtue and his daughter's happiness. He trusted that I was now sufficiently weaned from those habits which had formerly given him so much alarm. At the same time he conjured me, by every motive that an overflowing enthusiasm could suggest, to persist in my good resolutions, and never to change that residence, where I had found every degree of delight of which the human mind is in its present condition susceptible. Do not, said he, be drawn aside
by

by ambition ; do not be dazzled by the glitter of idle pomp and decoration ; do not enter the remotest circle of the vortex of dissipation ! Live in the midst of your family ; cultivate domestic affection ; be the solace and joy of your wife ; watch for the present and future welfare of your children ; and be assured that you will then be found no contemptible or unbeneficial member of the community at large !

Such were the last advices of the marquis de Damville. Excellent man ! how ill were your lessons remembered ! how ill your kindness remunerated ! He died in the sixth year of our marriage. The serious impresson which this event produced in my mind, gave me small inclination to enter into any species of society, and disposed me to quit Paris as soon as every respect had been paid to the obsequies of the deceased.

Upon my arrival in the metropolis on the present occasion, I immediately sought to renew my acquaintance with those amiable and eminent persons, who had for the most part constituted the circle of the marquis de Damville. They received me with that interest and attention, that I have usually found attendant on a cultivated mind. The pleasure was considerable, that resulted from meeting them thus again, after ten years cessation of intercourse. A few of them indeed were dead, and others dispersed by various accidents in different parts of France or of Europe. The greater part however I still found in that celebrated city, which might well be considered as the metropolis of the civilized world. The king had early been distinguished by his love of letters and the arts ; and added years, while they abated in his mind the eagerness of ambition and glory, gave

gave new strength to his more cultivated propensities. The liberality of his conduct, and the polished ease that characterised his manners, produced a general predilection in favour of the capital in which he resided.

I found all my former friends matured and improved by the silent influence of time. Their knowledge was increased; their views rendered wider; their conversation was more amusing and instructive, their manners more bland and unaffected. But, if their characters had experienced revolution, mine was more materially changed. I had before encountered them with all the heat and presumption of youth, with no views so much present to my mind as those of chivalry and a factitious honour, with no experience but that of a camp. I was impetuous, volatile and dissipated. I had not rested long enough upon any one of the flowers of

intellect to extract its honey ; and my mind was kept in a state of preternatural agitation by the passions of a gamester. It was now become cool, moderated and tranquil. The society of Marguerite had contributed much to the improvement of my character ; I had lived in no idle and brutish solitude, but in the midst of contemplation and letters ; and I had the passions of a husband and a father, in the extremest degree attached to his family. These passions will be found perhaps to be the true school of humanity : the man, whose situation continually exercises in him the softest and most amiable charities of our nature, will almost infallibly surpass his brethren in kindness to sympathise with, and promptness to relieve, the distresses of others.

Will it be accounted strange that, in Paris, surrounded by persons of various knowledge and liberal benevolence,

I found

I found myself under the influence of other feelings than any I had lately experienced? I was like a man who had suffered long calamity in a famished vessel or a town besieged, and is immediately after introduced into the midst of luxury, to a table loaded with the most costly dainties. Every viand has to his apprehension an exquisite relish, and every wine a delicious flavour, that he never perceived in them before. Let no one infer that my love for Marguerite was diminished; it has already sufficiently appeared in the course of my narrative, that no happiness could be more consummate than mine was with this admirable woman. Had I been called upon to choose for the seat of my future life, between my paternal chateau in the Bordelais, with Marguerite to grace my abode, on the one hand; and all the gratifications that Paris could af-

ford, on the other, I should not have hesitated even for an instant. But the mind of man is made capacious of various pleasures; and a person of sound and uncorrupted judgment, will perhaps always enjoy with emotion the delights which for a long time before he had not encountered, however envious his content may have been under their absence. I delighted to converse with the men of genius and refinement with whom Paris at this time abounded. It was a feast of soul of which I had rarely partaken in my rural retreat. I delighted to combine excellence with number, and, to a considerable degree at least, variety of intercourse with sentiments of regard and friendship. In these select societies I found no cold suppressions and reserve. Their members were brethren in disposition, similar in their pursuits, and congenial in their sentiments. When any one spoke,
it

it was that the person to whom he addressed himself might apprehend what was passing in his thoughts. They participated with sincerity and a liberal mind in each other's feelings, whether of gay delight or melancholy disappointment.

Thus situated, I forgot for a time my engagements with Marguerite. The scenes of St. Leon, its fields, its walks, its woods and its streams, faded from my mind. I forgot the pleasure with which I had viewed my children sporting on the green, and the delicious, rural suppers which I had so often partaken with my wife beneath my vines and my fig-trees at the period of the setting-sun. When I set out for Paris, these images had dwelt upon my mind, and saddened my fancy. At every stage I felt myself removed still further from the scene where my treasures and my affections were deposited. But,
shortly

shortly after, new scenes and new employments engaged my thoughts. The pleasures which I fought but weakly at first, every time they were tasted increased my partiality for them. I seemed for a time to be under the influence of an oblivion of my former life. Thus circumstanced, the folly which had so deep a root in my character took hold of me. I hired a magnificent hotel, and entertained at my own expence those persons in whose society I principally delighted. My circles became more numerous than those of the marquis de Damville, and were conducted in a very different style of splendour and profusion. I corresponded with Marguerite; but I continually found some new pretext for lengthening my stay; and she on her part, though the kindest and most indulgent of women, became seriously alarmed and unhappy.

As

As my parties were more numerous than those of the marquis de Damville had been, they were more mixed. Among others I occasionally associated with some of those noblemen who had been the companions of my former dissipation and gaming. An obvious consequence resulted from this. Parties of play were occasionally proposed to me. I resisted—I yielded. My first compliances were timid, hesitating and painful. I recollected the lessons and exhortations of my excellent father-in-law. At length however my alarms abated. I reproached myself with the want of an honourable confidence in my own firmness, and the cowardice of supposing that I was not to be trusted with the direction of my conduct.

One evening I ventured beyond the cautious limits I had at first prescribed myself, and won a considerable sum. This incident produced a strong impression

pression upon me, and filled my mind with tumult and agitation. There was a secret that I had concealed almost from myself, but which now recurred to me with tenfold violence. I was living beyond the means I had to discharge my expences. My propensity of this sort seemed to be fatal and irresistible. My marriage with Marguerite had occurred opportunely, to heal the breaches I had at that time made in my fortune, and to take from me the consciousness of embarrassments which I should otherwise have deeply felt. The death of the marquis, however deplorable in other respects, happened at a period when the spirit of profusion and magnificence which characterised me, had again involved my affairs in considerable difficulty. It might be supposed that these two cases of experience would have sufficed to extirpate my folly. But they had rather the contrary

trary effect. In each of them the event was such, as to prevent extravagance and thoughtlessness from producing their genuine results; and of consequence they appeared less criminal and mischievous in my eyes, than otherwise they probably would have appeared. I rather increased than diminished my establishment upon the death of my father-in-law. I had no reasonable prospect of any property hereafter to descend to me, that should exonerate me from the consequences of further prodigality. But I did not advert to this. I saw myself surrounded by my children; they were the delight and solace of my life; and yet I was heedless of their interests. Sometimes I resolved upon a more rigid economy. But economy is a principle that does not easily lay hold of any but a heart framed to receive it. It is a business of attentive and vigilant detail. It easily escapes the mind, amidst

amidst the impetuosity of the passions, the obstinacy of rooted propensities, and the seduction of long established habits. Marguerite indeed did not share with me in these follies; the simplicity and ingenuoufness of her mind were such, that she would have been as happy in a cottage as a palace; but, though she did not partake my vices, an ill-judged forbearance and tendernefs for my feelings, did not permit her effectually to counteract them. This is perhaps the only defect of character I am able to impute to her.

After I had won the sum to which I have alluded, I retired to my hotel full of anxious thoughts. It produced upon me in some degree the same effect as ordinarily belongs to a great calamity. I lay all night sleepless and disturbed. Ruin and despair presented themselves to my mind in a thousand forms.

forms. Heedless prodigality and dilapidated revenues passed in review before me. I counted the years of my life. I had completed the thirty-second year of my age. This was scarcely half the probable duration of human existence. How was I to support the remaining period, a period little afforted to difficulties and expedients, and which, in the close of it, seems imperiously to call for every indulgence? Hitherto an interval of four or five years had repeatedly sufficed to involve me in serious embarrassment. My children were growing up around me; my family was likely to become still larger; as my offspring increased in years, their demands upon my revenues would be more considerable. Were these demands to be slighted? Were my daughters, nay, was the heir of my rank and my name, to be committed to the compassion of the

the world, unprovided and forlorn? What a cheerless prospect? What a gloomy and disconsolate hue did these ideas spread upon that future, which the health of the human mind requires to have gilded with the beams of hope and expectation? I had already tried the expedient of economy, and I had uniformly found this inestimable and only sheet-anchor of prudence gliding from my deluded grasp. Could I promise myself better success in future? There seemed to be something in my habits, whether of inattention, ostentation or inconsistency, that baffled the strongest motives by which parsimony and frugality can be enforced.

Why did these thoughts importunately recur to me in the present moment? They were the suggestions of a malignant genius, thoughts, the destination of which was to lead me into a gulph

gulph of misery and guilt! While I was going on in a regular train of expence, while I was scooping the mine that was to swallow me and my hopes together, I had the art to keep these reflections at bay. Now that I had met with an unexpected piece of good-fortune, they rushed upon me with irresistible violence. Unfortunate coincidence! Miserable,—rather let me say, guilty, abandoned miscreant!

As soon as I rose in the morning, I went to the closet where, the evening before, I had deposited my recent acquisitions. I spread out the gold before me. I gazed upon it with intentness. My eyes, a moment after, rolled in vacancy. I traversed the apartment with impatient steps. All the demon seemed to make his descent upon my soul. This was the first time that I had ever felt the struggle of conscious guilt and dishonour. I was far indeed
from

from anticipating that species of guilt, and that species of ruin, which soon after overwhelmed me. My mind did not once recur to the possibility of any serious mischief. I dwelt only, as gamesters perhaps usually do, upon the alternative between acquisition and no acquisition. I did not take into the account the ungovernableness of my own passions. I assumed it as unquestionable, that I could stop when I pleased. The thoughts that tortured me were, in the first place, those of a sanguine and unexperienced adventurer in a lottery, whose mind rests not for a moment upon the sum he has risked, but who, having in fancy the principal prize already in his possession, and having distributed it to various objects and purposes, sometimes fearfully recurs to the possibility of his disappointment, and anticipates with terror what will be his situation, if deprived of
this

this imaginary wealth. I had now for the first time opened my eyes to the real state of my affairs, and I clung with proportionable vehemence to this plank which was to bear me from the storm. In the second place, I felt, though darkly and unwillingly, the immorality of my conception. To game may, in some instances, not be in diametrical opposition to liberality of mind; but he who games for the express purpose of improving his circumstances, must be an idiot, if he does not sometimes recollect that the money lost may be as serious a mischief to his neighbour, as the money gained can possibly be a benefit to himself. It is past a question, that he who thus turns his amusement into his business, loses the dignity of a man of honour, and puts himself upon a level with the most avaricious and usurious merchant.

Though

Though I was far from having digested a specific plan of enriching myself by these discreditable means, yet the very tumult of my thoughts operated strongly to lead me once more to the gaming-table. I was in no humour to busy myself with my own thoughts; the calmness of literary discussion, and the polished interchange of wit, which had lately so much delighted me, had now no attraction for my heart; the turbulence of a scene of high play alone had power to distract my attention from the storm within. I won a second time. I felt the rapidity and intenseness of my contemplations still further accelerated. I will not over again detail what they were. Suffice it to say, that my hopes became more ardent, my conception of the necessity of this resource more impressive, and my alarm lest this last expedient should fail me more tormenting.

The next time I lost half as much as the sum of my winnings. I then proceeded for several days in a nearly regular alternation of gain and loss. This, as soon as the fact unavoidably forced itself upon my mind, only served to render my thoughts more desperate. No, exclaimed I, it was not for this that I entered upon so tormenting a pursuit. It is not for this that I have deserted the learned societies which were lately my delight, and committed myself to a sea of disquiet and anxiety. I came not here like a boy for amusement; or, like one who has been bred in the lap of ignorance and wealth, to seek a relief from the burthen of existence, and to find a stimulus to animate my torpid spirits. Am I then to be for ever baffled? Am I to cultivate a tract of land, which is to present me nothing in return but unvaried barrenness? Am I continually to wind up

my passions, and new-string my attention in vain? Am I a mere instrument to be played upon by endless hopes and fears and tormenting wishes? Am I to be the sport of events, the fool of promise, always agitated with near-approaching good, yet always deluded?

This frame of mind led me on insensibly to the most extravagant adventures. It threw me in the first place into the hands of notorious gamblers. Men of real property shrunk from the stakes I proposed, as, though they were in some degree infected with the venom of gaming, their infection was not so deep as mine, nor with my desperation of thought. The players with whom I engaged, were for the most part well known to every one but myself not to be able to pay the sums they played for, if they lost; nay, this fact might be said in some sense to be known to me as well as the rest, though I obsti-

I obstinately steeled myself against the recollection of it. One evening, I won of one of these persons a very large sum, for which I suffered him to play with me upon honour. The consequence was simple. The next morning he took his departure from Paris, and I heard of him no more.

Before this however the tide of success had set strongly against me. I had sustained some serious vicissitudes; and, while I was playing with the wretch I have just mentioned, my eagerness increased as my good luck began, and I flattered myself that I should now avenge myself of fortune for some of her late unkindnesses. My anguish,—why should I call the thing by a disproportionate and trivial appellation?—my agony—was by so much the greater, when I found that this person, the very individual who had already stripped me of considerable

H 2

sums,

sums, had disappeared, and left me without the smallest benefit from my imaginary winnings.

No man who has not felt, can possibly image to himself the tortures of a gamester, of a gamester like me, who played for the improvement of his fortune, who played with the recollection of a wife and children dearer to him than the blood that bubbled through the arteries of his heart, who might be said, like the savages of ancient Germany, to make these relations the stake for which he threw, who saw all my own happiness and all theirs through the long vista of life, depending on the turn of a card! Hell is but the chimera of priests, to bubble idiots and cowards. What have they invented, to come into competition with what I felt! Their alternate interchange of flames and ice, is but a feeble image of the eternal varieties of hope and fear. All bodily racks

racks and torments are nothing compared with certain states of the human mind. The gamester would be the most pitiable, if he were not the most despicable, creature that exists. Arrange ten bits of painted paper in a certain order, and he is ready to go wild with the extravagance of his joy. He is only restrained by some remains of shame from dancing about the room, and displaying the vileness of his spirit by every sort of freak and absurdity. At another time, when his hopes have been gradually worked up into a paroxysm, an unexpected turn arrives, and he is made the most miserable of men. Never shall I cease to recollect the sensation I have repeatedly felt, in the instantaneous sinking of the spirits, the conscious fire that spread over my visage, the anger in my eye, the burning dryness of my throat, the sentiment that in a moment was ready to

overwhelm with curses the cards, the stake, my own existence and all mankind. How every malignant and insufferable passion seemed to rush upon my soul! What nights of dreadful solitude and despair did I repeatedly pass during the progress of my ruin! It was the night of the soul! My mind was wrapped in a gloom that could not be pierced! My heart was oppressed with a weight, that no power, human or divine, was equal to remove! My eyelids seemed to press downward with an invincible burthen! My eyeballs were ready to start and crack their sockets! I lay motionless the victim of ineffable horror! The whole endless night seemed to be filled with one vast, appalling, immoveable idea! It was a stupour, more insupportable and tremendous, than the utmost whirl of pain, or the fiercest agony of exquisite perception!

One

One day that my mind was in a state of excessive anguish and remorse (I had already contrived by this infernal means to dispossess myself of the half of my property), my son came unexpectedly into my chamber. For some time I had scarcely ever seen him: such is a gamester! All the night, while he slept, I was engaged in these haunts of demons. All the day, while he was awake, and studying with his masters, or amusing himself, I was in my bed-chamber, endeavouring to court a few broken hours of sleep. When, notwithstanding the opposition of our habits, I had the opportunity of seeing him, I rather shunned to use, than sought to embrace it. The sight of him had a favour of bitterness in it, that more than balanced all the solace of natural affection. It brought before me the image of his mother and his sisters; it presented to my soul a

frightful tale of deserted duties; it was more galling and envenomed than the sting of scorpions.

Starting at the sound of the opening door, I called out abruptly and with some harshness, Who is there? What do you want?

It is I, Sir, replied the boy; it is Charles; come to pay his duty to you!

I do not want you now; you should not come but when you know I am at leisure; answered I somewhat disturbed.

Very well, Sir; very well: I am going. As he spoke, his voice seemed suffocated with tears. He was on the point of shutting the door, and leaving me to myself.

Charles! said I, not well knowing what it was I intended to do.

He returned.

Come here, my dear boy!

I took

I took his hand, I drew him between my knees, I hid my face in his neck, I shook with the violence of my emotion.

Go, go, boy : you perceive I cannot talk to you.

I pushed him gently from me.

Papa! cried he, I do not like to leave you. I know I am but a boy, and can be but of little use to you. If mamma were with you, I would not be troublesome. I should cry, when I saw you were grieved, but I would ask no questions, and would leave you, because you desired it. I hope you have not had any bad news?

No, my boy, no. Come to me to-morrow, and I will be at leisure, and will talk a great deal to you.

Ah, papa, to-morrow! Every day that I did not see you; I thought it would be to-morrow! And there was one to-morrow, and another to-mor-

row, and so many, that it seemed as if you had forgotten to speak to me at all.

Why, Charles, you do not doubt my word? I tell you, that to-morrow you shall see me as long as you please.

Well, well, I will wait! But do then let it be all day! I will not go to college, and it shall be a holiday. Papa, I do not like my lessons half so well as I did, since I have neither you nor mamma that I can tell what they are about.

Good bye, Charles! Be a good boy! remember to-morrow! Good bye!

Papa! now I am sure you look a good deal better than you did at first. Let me tell you something about the lesson I read this morning. It was a story of Zaleucus the Locrian, who put out one of his own eyes, that he might preserve eye-sight to his son.

This

This artless story, thus innocently introduced, cut me to the soul. I started in my chair, and hid my face upon the table.

Papa, what is the matter? Indeed you frighten me!

Zaleucus was a father! What then am I?

Yes, Zaleucus was very good indeed! But, do you know, his son was very naughty. It was his disobedience and wickedness, that made him liable to such a punishment. I would not for the world be like Zaleucus's son. I hope, papa, you will never suffer from my wilfulness. You shall not, papa, indeed, indeed!

I caught the boy in my arms. No, you are very good! you are too good! I cannot bear it!

Well, papa, I wish I were able to show you that I love you, as well as ever Zaleucus loved his son!

I was melted with the ingenuoufness of the boy's expreffion. I quitted him. I paced up and down the room. Suddenly as if by a paroxyfm of infanity, I feized my child by the arm, I feated myself, I drew him towards me, I put my eye upon him.

Boy, how dare you talk to me of Zaleucus? Do you mean to infinuate a reproach? Do I not difcharge a father's duty? If I do not, know, urchin, I will not be infulted by my child !

The boy was aftonifhed. He burft into tears, and was filent.

I was moved by his evident diftrefs. No, child, you have no father. I am afraid you have not. You do not know my baseness. You do not know that I am the deadliest foe you have in the world.

Dear papa, do not talk thus! Do not I know that you are the beft of men? Do not I love you and mamma better

better than every body else put together?

Well, Charles, cried I, endeavouring to compose myself, we will talk no more now. Did not I tell you, you should not come to me, but when you knew it was a proper time? I hope you will never have reason to hate me:

I never will hate you, papa, do to me what you will!

He saw I wished to be alone, and left me.

CHAP. VI.

IN the evening of the same day, my beloved Marguerite arrived unexpectedly at Paris. In the beginning of our separation, I had been to the last degree punctual in my letters. I had no pleasure so great, as retiring to my closet, and pouring out my soul to the most adorable of women. By degrees I relaxed in punctuality. Ordinary occupations, however closely pursued, have a method in them, that easily combines with regularity in points of an incidental nature. But gaming, when pursued with avidity, subverts all order, and forces every avocation from the place assigned it. When my insane project of supplying the inadequateness of my fortune by this expedient began

began to produce an effect exactly opposite, I could not, but with the extremest difficulty, string my mind to write to the mistress of my soul. I endeavoured not to think, with distinctness and attention, of the persons whose happiness was most nearly involved with mine. I said to myself, Yet another venture must be tried; fortune shall change the animosity with which she has lately pursued me; I will repair the breaches that have been sustained; and I shall then return with tenfold avidity to subjects that at present I dare not fix my mind upon. My letters were accordingly short, unfrequent and unsatisfactory; and those of Marguerite discovered increasing anguish, perturbation and anxiety. What a change in the minds of both had the lapse of a few months produced! Not that my attachment had suffered the diminution of a single particle;

ticle ; but that attachment, which had lately been the source of our mutual felicity, was now fraught only with distress. My mind was filled with horrors ; and Marguerite expected from me an encouragement and consolation in absence, which, alas, I had it not in my power to give !

I had now continued in Paris for a time vastly greater than I had originally proposed. After having remained more than ten days without receiving one word of intelligence, a letter of mine was delivered to Marguerite, more short, mysterious and distressing to her feelings, than any that had preceded. The ten-days silence, from me who at first had never missed an opportunity of pouring out my soul to her, and contributing to her pleasure, was exquisitely painful. There is scarcely any thing that produces such a sickness of the heart, as the repeated proro-

2
tion

tion of hope. But, when the letter arrived that had been so anxiously looked for, when the hand-writing of the superscription was recognised, when the letter was treasured up for the impatiently desired moment of solitude, that the sacred emotions of the heart might suffer no interruption, and when it at last appeared so cold, so ominous, so withering to the buds of affection, the determination of Marguerite was speedily formed. The relations that bound us together were of too mighty a value, to be dispensed or to be trifled with. She felt them as the very cords of existence. For ten years she had known no solace that was disconnected from my idea, no care but of our own happiness and that of our offspring. Benevolent she was almost beyond human example, and interested for the welfare of all she knew; but these were brief and mutable

ble concerns; they were not incorporated with the stamina of her existence. I was the whole world to her; she had no idea of satisfaction without me. Her firmness had been sufficiently tried by the interposal of separation and absence. How was she to interpret the obscurity that had now arisen? Had I forgotten my family and my wife? Had I been corrupted and debauched by that Paris, the effects of which upon my character her father had so deeply apprehended? Had I, in contempt of every thing sacred, entered into some new attachment? Had the attractions of some new beauty in the metropolis, made me indifferent to the virtue of my children, and the life of their mother? Perhaps the length of our attachment had infected me with satiety, and the inconstancy of my temper had been roused by the charms of novelty. Perhaps the certainty of her kindness and regard had no longer allurements

allurements for me ; and I might be excited to the pursuit of another by the pleasures of hope combined with uncertainty, and of a coyness, that seemed to promise compliance hereafter, even while it pronounced a present denial. These were the images that haunted her mind ; they engendered all the wildness, and all the torments, of a delirious paroxysm ; she resolved that no time should be sacrificed to needless uncertainty, and that no effort of hers should be unexerted to prevent the mischief she feared.

It was evening when she arrived. I was upon the point of repairing to that scene of nightly resort, the source of all my guilt and all my miseries. I enquired of my son's valet, where he was, and how he had been in the course of the day. He was gone to bed : he had appeared unusually sad, sometimes in tears ; and, while he was undressing, had

had sighed deeply two or three times. While I was collecting this account in my own apartment, the gates of the hotel opened, and a number of horsemen entered the court yard, I was somewhat surprised; because, though I was accustomed to see much company, few of my acquaintance visited me at so late an hour, except on the evenings appropriated to receive them. I crossed the saloon to enquire. One of the servants exclaimed, It is Bernardin's voice; it must be my mistress that is come!

Nothing could be further from my mind than the thought of her arrival. I flew through the passage; I was on the spot, the moment that the servant prepared to conduct his mistress from the litter; I received Marguerite in my arms, and led her into the house. If I had expected her arrival, I should infallibly have met her at this moment
with

with anxiety and confusion; I should have gone round the circle of my thoughts, and should not have had confidence to encounter the beam of her eye. But the event was so unexpected as to drive all other ideas from my mind; and, in consequence, I enjoyed several minutes,—ages, rather let me say,—of the sincerest transport. I kissed the mistress of my soul with ecstasy; I gazed upon her well known lineaments and features; I listened to the pleasing melody of her voice; I was intoxicated with delight. Upon occasions like this, it seems as if every former joy that had marked the various periods of intercourse, distilled its very spirit and essence, to compose a draught, ten times more delicious and refined than had ever before been tasted. Our meeting was like awaking from the dead; it was the emancipation of the weary captive, who exchanges

changes the dungeon's gloom for the lustre of the morning, and who feels a celestial exhilaration of heart, the very memory of which had been insensibly wearing away from his treacherous brain. All my senses partook of the rapture. Marguerite seemed to shed ambrosial odours round her; her touch was thrilling; her lips were nectar; her figure was that of a descended deity!

Her pleasure was not less than mine. It is indeed absurd, it may be termed profanation, to talk of solitary pleasure. No sensation ordinarily distinguished by that epithet, can endure the test of a moment's inspection, when compared with a social enjoyment. It is then only that a man is truly pleased, when pulse replies to pulse, when the eyes discourse eloquently to each other, when in responsive tones and words the soul is communicated. Altogether, we are conscious of a sober, a chaste
and

and dignified intoxication, an elevation of spirit, that does not bereave the mind of itself, and that endures long enough for us to analyse and favour the causes of our joy.

For some time we rested on a sofa, each filled and occupied with the observation of the other. My eyes assured Marguerite of the constancy of my affection; my kisses were those of chaste, undivided, entire attachment.

Our words were insignificant and idle, the broken and incoherent phrases of a happiness that could not be silent. At length Marguerite exclaimed, It is enough; my fears are vanished; I have no questions to ask, no doubts to remove. Yet why, my Reginald, did you suffer those doubts to gather, those fears to accumulate? Surely you knew the singleness of my affection! How many painful days and hours might you have saved me, almost by a word!

Forgive

Forgive me, my love, replied I! Waste not the golden hour of meeting in recrimination! Feeling, as your angelic goodness now makes me feel, I wonder at myself, that I could for one moment have consented to separation; that I could have thought any thing but this, existence; or that, having experienced the joys that you have bestowed, I could lose all image of the past, and, dwelling in a desert, imagine it paradise!

Recrimination! rejoined Marguerite. No, my love; you make me too happy, to leave room for any thing but gratitude and affection! Forgive me, Reginald, if I pretend that, in meeting you thus, I find myself your superior in happiness and love. You only awake from lethargy. forgetfulness of yourself and—of me; but I awake from anguish, a separation, that I desired.

fired not at first, and of which I hourly wished to see an end, from doubts that would intrude, and refused to be expelled, from the incessant contemplation and regret of a felicity, once possessed, but possessed no longer! Melancholy ideas, gloomy prognostics overspread my sleepless nights, and bedewed my pillow with tears! This it is, that, at last, has driven me from my family and daughters, resolved to obtain the certainty of despair, or the dispersion of my fears! Have I known all this, and think you that I do not enjoy with rapture this blissful moment?

While we were thus conversing, Charles entered the room. He was not yet asleep when his mother arrived; he heard her voice; and hastened to put on his clothes, that he might rush into her arms. The pleasure Marguerite had conceived from our meeting, and the affectionate serenity that had

taken possession of her soul, infused double ardour into the embraces she bestowed on her son. He gazed earnestly in her face; he kissed her with fervency; but was silent.

Why, Charles! said she, what is the matter with you? Are not you glad to see me?

That I am, mamma! So glad, that I do not know what to do with myself! I was afraid I never should have been glad again!

Pooh, boy! what do you mean? You were not mother-sick, were you?

Yes, indeed, I was sick, sick at heart! Not that I am a coward! I think that I could have been satisfied to have been without either my father or you for a little while. But papa is so altered, you cannot think! He never smiles and looks happy; and, when I see him, instead of making me joyful, as it used to do, it makes me sad!

Dear

Dear Reginald! replied the mother, looking at me; is it possible that, while my heart was haunted with fear and suspicions, separation alone should have had such an effect on you?

I dare say it was that! interposed the boy. I could not make papa smile, all I could do: but, now you are come, he will soon be well! How much he must love you, mamma?

The artless prattle of my son struck anguish to my soul, and awakened a whole train of tormenting thoughts. Alas! thought I, can it indeed be love, that thus contrives against the peace of its object? Would to God, my child! that my thoughts were as simple and pure as thy innocent bosom!

And yet, added the boy, as if recollecting himself, if he could not see you, sure that was no reason for him to avoid me? He seemed as much afraid of me, as I have seen some

of my play-fellows of a snake! Indeed, mamma, it was a sad thing that, when I wanted him to kiss me and press me to his bosom, he shrunk away from me! There now! it was just so, as he looks now, that papa used to frown upon me, I cannot tell how often! Now is not that ugly, mamma?

I could no longer govern the tumult of my thoughts. Peace, urchin! cried I. Why did you come to mar the transport of our meeting? Just now, Marguerite, I forgot myself, and was happy! Now all the villain rises in my soul!

My wife was so astonished at the perturbation of my manner, and at the words I uttered, that she was scarcely able to articulate. Reginald! in broken accents she exclaimed—my love!—my husband!

No matter! said I. It shall yet be well!

well! My heart assures me, it shall!
—Be not disturbed, my love! I will
never cause you a moment's anguish!
I would sooner die a thousand deaths!
—Forget the odious thoughts that poor
Charles has excited in me so unseason-
ably! They were mere idle words!
Depend upon it they were!

While I was speaking, Marguerite
hid her face upon the sofa. I took
her hand, and by my caresses endea-
voured to soothe and compose her.
At length, turning to me:

Reginald! said she, in a voice of
anguish, Do you then endeavour to
hide from me the real state of your
thoughts? Was the joy that attended
our meeting, perishable and deceitful?
After ten years of unbounded affection
and confidence, am I denied to be the
partner of your bosom?

No, Marguerite, no! this was but
the thought of a moment! By to-

morrow's dawn it shall have no existence in my bosom. Why should I torment you with what so soon shall have no existence to myself? Meanwhile, be assured, my love (instead of suffering diminution) is more full, more fervent and intire, than it ever was!

At this instant my mind experienced an extraordinary impression. Instead of being weaned, by the presence of this admirable woman, from my passion for gaming, it became stronger than ever. If Charles had not entered at the critical moment he did, I should have remained with Marguerite, and, amidst the so long untasted solace of love, have, at least for this night, forgotten my cares. But that occurrence had overturned every thing, had uncovered the wounds of my bosom, and awakened conceptions that refused to be laid to sleep again. The arms of my wife, that were about to embrace
me,

me, suddenly became to me a nest of scorpions. I could as soon have rested and enjoyed myself upon the top of Vesuvius, when it flamed. New as I was to this species of anguish, tranquilly and full of virtuous contentment as I had hitherto passed the years of my married state, the pangs of a guilty conscience I was wholly unable to bear. I rose from my seat, and was upon the point of quitting the room.

Marguerite perceived by my manner that there was something extraordinary passing in my mind. Where are you going, Reginald? said she.

I answered with a slight nod.—Not far, I replied, attempting an air of apathy and unconcern.

She was not satisfied. You are not going out? She enquired.

I returned to where I had been sitting. My love, I was going out at the moment of your arrival. It is ne-

cessary, I assure you. I hope I shall soon be back. I am sorry I am obliged to leave you. Compose yourself. You are in want of rest, and had better go to bed.

Stop, Reginald! Afford me a minute's leisure before you depart! Leave us, Charles! Good night, my dear boy! Kiss me; remember that your mother is now in the same house with you; and sleep in peace.

The boy quitted the room.

Reginald! said the mother, I have no wish to control your desires, or be a spy upon your actions. But your conduct seems so extraordinary in this instance, as to dispense me from the observation of common rules. I have always been a complying wife; I have never set myself in contradiction to your will; I appeal to yourself for the truth of this. I despise however those delicacies, an adherence to which
would

would entail upon us the sacrifice of all that is most valuable in human life. Can I shut my ears upon the mysterious expressions which Charles's complaints have extorted from you? Can I be insensible to the extraordinary purpose you declare of leaving me, when I have yet been scarcely half an hour under the roof with you? Before Charles came in, you seem to have entertained no such design.

My love, replied I, how seriously you comment upon the most insignificant incident! Is it extraordinary that your unexpected arrival should at first have made me forget an engagement that I now recollect?

St. Leon, answered my wife, before you indulge in surprise at my earnestness, recollect the circumstances that immediately preceded it. Through successive weeks I have waited for some satisfactory and agreeable intelligence

I 5 from

from you. I had a right before this to have expected your return. Uncertainty and a thousand fearful apprehensions have at length driven me from my home, and brought me to Paris. I am come here for satisfaction to my doubts, and peace to my anxious heart. Wonder not therefore, if you find something more earnest and determined in my proceedings now, than upon ordinary occasions. Give me, I conjure you, give me ease and relief, if you are able! If not, at least allow me this consolation, to know the worst!

Be pacified, Marguerite! I rejoined. I am grieved. Heaven knows how deeply grieved, to have occasioned you a moment's pain. But, since you lay so much stress upon this circumstance, depend upon it, I will postpone the business I was going about, and stay with you.

This concession, voluntary and sincere,

cere, produced an effect that I had not foreseen. Marguerite gazed for a moment in my face, and then threw herself upon my neck.

Forgive me, my beloved husband ! she cried. You indeed make me ashamed of myself. I feel myself inexcusable. I feel that I have been brooding over imaginary evils, and creating the misery that corroded my heart. How inexpressibly you rise my superior ! But I will conquer my weakness. I insist upon your going to the engagement you have made, and will henceforth place the most entire confidence in your prudence and honour.

Every word of this speech was a dagger to my heart. What were my feelings, while this admirable woman was taking shame to herself for her suspicions, and pouring out her soul in commendation of my integrity! I looked inward, and found every thing

I 6 there

there the reverse of her apprehension, a scene of desolation and remorse. I embraced her in silence. My heart panted upon her bosom, and seemed bursting with a secret that it was death to reveal. I ought, in return for her generosity, to have given up my feigned engagement, and devoted this night at least to console and pacify her. But I could not, and I dared not. The wound of my bosom was opened, and would not be closed. The more I loved her for her confidence, the less I could endure myself in her presence. To play the hypocrite for so many hours, to assume a face of tranquillity and joy, while all within was tumult and horror, was a task too mighty for human powers to execute. I accepted of Marguerite's permission, and left her. Even in the short interval before I quitted the house, my carriage was near to betraying me. I could perceive

her watchful of my countenance, as if again suspicious that some fatal secret lurked in my mind. She said nothing further upon the subject however, and I presently escaped the inquisition of her eye.

It is scarcely necessary to describe the state of my mind as I passed along the streets. It is sufficient to say that every thing I had felt before from the passion of gaming, was trivial to the sensations that now occupied me. Now first it stood confessed before me, a demon that poisoned all my joys, that changed the transport of a meeting with the adored of my soul into anguish, that drove me forth from her yet untasted charms a solitary wanderer on the face of the earth. My busy soul drew forth at length the picture of what this encounter would have been, if it had been sanctified with the stamp of conscious innocence. At one
moment

moment I felt myself the most accursed of mankind; I believed that he who could find, as I did, barrenness and blasting in the choicest of heaven's blessings, must be miserable beyond precedent or hope. Shortly after however, I reviewed again the image of my poison, and found in it the promise of a cure. The more desperate my case appeared to me, with the greater insanity of expectation did I assure myself that this one night should retrieve all my misfortunes. In giving to it this destination indeed, I should afflict the gentle bosom of my wife but too probably with some hours of uneasiness. But the event would richly repay her for so transitory a suffering. I would then open my whole mind to her. I would practise no more reserves; I should no longer be driven to the refuge of a vile hypocrisy. I would bid farewell to the frowns and
the

the careffes of fortune. I would require of her no further kindneffes. If I were incapable myfelf of a rigid economy, I would commit implicitly to Marguerite the difpofal of my income, whom I knew to be every way qualified for the office. With thefe reflections I nerved my mind to the moft decifive adventures.

Why fhould I enter into a long detail of the incidents of this crisis? Soon, though not immediately, I began to lofe confiderable fums. I brought with me in the firft instance a penetrating eye, a collected mind, an intellect prepared for uninterrupted exertion. Misfortune fubverted all this. My eye grew wild, my foul tempeftuous, my thoughts incoherent and diftracted. I was incapable of any thing judicious; but I was determined to perfevere. I played till morning, nor could the light of morning induce
me

me to desist. The setting sun of that day beheld me a beggar!

There is a degree of misery, which, as it admits of no description, so does it leave no distinct traces in the memory. It seems as if the weakness of the human mind alike incapacitated it to support the delirium of joy, and the extremity of sorrow. Of what immediately succeeded the period to which I have conducted my narrative, I have no recollection, but a horror beyond all names of horror, wild, inexplicable, unintelligible. Let no one however imagine that the temporary desertion of the soul is any alleviation of its misery. The mind that sinks under its suffering, does not by that conduct shake off its burthen. Rather, ten thousand times rather, would I endure all the calamities that have ever yet received a name, the sensations and history of which are capable of
being

being delineated, than sustain that which has no words by which to express itself, and the conception of which must be trusted solely to the faculties and sympathy of the reader. Where is the cold and inapprehensive spirit that talks of madness as a refuge from sorrow? Oh, dull and unconceiving beyond all belief! I cannot speak of every species of madness; but I also have been mad! This I know, that there is a vacancy of soul, where all appears buried in stupidity, and scarcely deserves the name of thought, that is more intolerable than the bitterest reflections. This I know, that there is an incoherence, in which the mind seems to wander without rudder and pilot, that laughs to scorn the superstitious fictions of designing priests. Oh, how many sleepless days and weeks did I endure! the thoughts frantic,
the

the tongue raving ! While we can still adhere, if I may so express myself, to the method of misery, there is a sort of nameless complacency that lurks under all that we can endure. We are still conscious that we are men ; we wonder at and admire our powers of being miserable. But, when the masts and tackle of the intellectual vessel are all swept away, then is the true sadness. We have no consciousness to sustain us, no sentiment of dignity, no secret admiration of what we are, still clinging to our hearts.

All this I venture to affirm, with the full recollection of what I suffered when restored to my senses, present to my mind.

When the account was closed, and the loss of my last stake had finished the scene, I rose, and, quitting the fatal spot where these transactions had passed,

passed, entered the street, with a heart oppressed, and a bursting head. My eyes glared, but I saw nothing, and could think of nothing. It was already nearly dark; and the day which had been tempestuous, was succeeded by a heavy and settled rain. I wandered for some time, not knowing whither I went. My pace which had at first been slow, gradually increased, and I traversed the whole city with a hurried and impatient step. The streets which had contained few persons at first, gradually lost those few. I was almost alone. I saw occasionally ragged and houseless misery shrinking under the cover of a miserable shed; I saw the midnight robber, watching for his prey, and ready to start upon the unwary passenger. From me he fled; there was something in my air that impelled even desperate violation to shrink

shrink from the encounter. I continued this incessant, unmeaning exertion for hours. At length, by an accidental glance of the eye, I found myself at the gate of my own hotel. Heedless of what I did, I entered; and, as nature was now completely exhausted within me, sunk down in a sort of insensibility at the foot of the grand stair-case.

This stupour after a considerable interval gradually subsided. I opened my eyes, and saw various figures flitting about me; but I seemed to myself equally incapable of collecting my thoughts, and of speech. My understanding indeed shortly became clearer, but an insuperable reluctance to voluntary exertion hung upon me. I explained myself only in monosyllables; a sort of instinctive terror of disclosing what had passed, to the admirable woman

man I had sacrificed, maintained in me this perpetual reserve. For several days together I sat from morning till night in one immoveable posture, nor was any thing of force enough to awaken me to exertion.

CHAP. VII.

IT was not long before the unhappy partner of my fortunes was informed of what had passed. The wretches who had stripped me of my all, soon made their appearance to claim what was no longer mine. What would have been their reception, if I had sufficiently possessed myself to parley with them on the subject, I am unable to determine. I could not have preserved the wreck of my property from their grasp but at the expence of an indelible stain upon my honour; yet my desperation would probably have led me to a conduct equally extravagant and useless. In the condition in which I was, the whole direction of the business devolved upon Marguerite ;

rite; and never did human creature demean herself with greater magnanimity and propriety. She saw at once that she could not resist their claims but at the expence of my reputation; for herself she valued not riches, and had no dread of poverty; and, thus circumstanced, she had the courage herself to bring to me the papers they offered, the object of which I scarcely understood, and to cause me to annex that signature which was to strip her and her children of all earthly fortune. Her purpose was, as soon as this business was over, to cause us to quit France, and retire into some scene of virtuous obscurity. But she would not leave behind her for the last descendants of the counts de St. Leon any avoidable disgrace. Her mode of reasoning upon the subject was extremely simple. Obscurity she regarded as no misfortune; and eminent

ment situation, where it fairly presented itself, as a responsibility it would be base to shrink from: ignominy alone she considered as the proper theme of abhorrence. For the fickleness and inconstancy of fortune it is impossible to answer; by one of those reverses in which she appears to delight, she might yet restore us to the lustre of our former condition; but, if the name of St. Leon was henceforth to disappear from the annals of France, she was desirous at least, as far as depended on her, that it should expire, like the far-famed bird of Arabia, in the midst of perfumes.

When the whole situation of Marguerite is taken into consideration, the reader, like myself, will stand astonished at the fortitude of her conduct. She had come to Paris, unable any longer to tranquillise the agitation of her mind, and exhausted
with,

with fears, suspicions and alarms. When she arrived, she experienced indeed one delusive moment of transport and joy. But that was soon over. It was succeeded by reflections and conjectures respecting the mysteriousness of my behaviour; it was succeeded by my unexpected departure, and the hourly expectation of my return. After the lapse of a night and a day, I returned indeed, but in what a condition? Drenched with rain, trembling with inanition, speechless and alone. Scarcely had she received notice of my arrival, and come forward to meet me, than she saw me fall, motionless and insensible, at her feet. She watched my recovery, and hung with indescribable expectation over my couch. She was only called away by the wretches who came to advance their accursed claims, and to visit her with the intelligence of our ruin, as with

a thunderbolt. Already enfeebled and alarmed by all the preceding circumstances, they spoke with no consideration to her weakness, they stooped to no qualifications and palliatives, but disclosed the whole in the most abrupt and shocking manner. Any other woman would have sunk under this accumulation of ill. Marguerite only borrowed vigour from her situation, and rose in proportion to the pressure of the calamity. She took her resolution at once, and answered them in the most firm and decisive language.

The period of inactivity and stupour that at first seized me, was succeeded by a period of frenzy. It was in this condition that Marguerite conducted me and my children to an obscure retreat in the canton of Soleure in the republic of Switzerland. Cheapness was the first object; for the most miserable pittance was all she had saved from

from the wreck of our fortune. She had not chosen for beauty of situation, or magnificence of prospects. The shock her mind had sustained was not so great as to destroy her activity and fortitude, but it left her little leisure for the wantonness of studied indulgence. The scene was remote and somewhat sterile. She conceived that, when I recovered my senses, an event which she did not cease to promise herself, solitude would be most grateful, at least to the first stage of my returning reason.

Hither then it was that she led me, our son and three daughters. Immediately upon our arrival she purchased a small and obscure, but neat cottage, and attired herself and her children in habits similar to those of the neighbouring peasants. My paternal estates, as well as those which had fallen to me by marriage, had all been swallowed

up in the gulph which my accursed conduct had prepared. Marguerite made a general sale of our moveables, our ornaments, and even our clothes. A few books, guided by the attachment to literature which had always attended me, were all that she saved from the wreck. A considerable part of the sum thus produced was appropriated by my creditors. Marguerite had the prudence and skill to satisfy them all, and was contented to retain that only which remained when their demands were discharged. This was the last dictate of her pride and the high-born integrity of her nature, at the time that she thus departed a voluntary exile from her native country. Two servants accompanied us in our flight, whose attachment was so great, that even if their attendance had not been necessary, it would have been found somewhat difficult to shake them off.

off. Marguerite however was governed by the strictest principles of economy; and, whatever the struggle might have been with the importunity of humble affection in dismissing these last remains of our profuse and luxurious household, she would have thought herself obliged to proceed even to this extreme, if judicious parsimony had demanded it from her. But it did not. Our youngest daughter was at this time only twelve months old, and it would have been scarcely possible for the mother, however resolute in her exertions, to have discharged the cares due to such a family, at a time when the father of it was suffering under so heavy an affliction. One female servant she retained to assist her in these offices. She could not dispense herself from a very assiduous attention to me. She could never otherwise have been satisfied, that

K 3

every

every thing was done that ought to be done, that every tenderness was exercised that might be demanded by my humiliating situation, or that sufficient sagacity and skill were employed in watching and encouraging the gleams of returning reason. The violence of my paroxysms however was frequently such as to render a manual force greater than hers, necessary to prevent me from effecting some desperate mischief. Bernardin a trusty servant, nearly of my own age, and who had attended upon my person almost from infancy, was retained by Marguerite for this purpose. I was greatly indebted for the recovery which speedily followed, to the affectionate anxiety and enlightened care of this incomparable woman. It is inconceivable to those who have never been led to a practical examination of the subject, how much may be effected in this respect by an attachment

ment ever on the watch, and an understanding judicious to combine, where hired attendance would sleep, and the coarseness of a blunt insensibility would irritate, nay perhaps mortally injure.

It is scarcely possible to imagine a wife more interesting and admirable than Marguerite appeared upon the present occasion. Fallen from the highest rank to the lowest poverty, she did not allow herself a mean and pitiful regret. No reverse could be more complete and abrupt, but she did not sink under it. She proved in the most convincing manner, that her elevation was not the offspring of wealth or rank, but was properly her own. She gave a grace, even a lustre, to poverty, which it can only receive from the emanations of a cultivated mind. Her children were reconciled and encouraged by her example, and soon

K 4

forgot

forgot those indulgences which had not yet had time to emasculate their spirits. The deplorable situation to which the father of the family was reduced, was far from inducing her to cease from her efforts in the bitterness of despair. She determined for the present to be both a father and a mother to her children. She looked forward with confidence to my speedy recovery. Though I was the author of her calamities, she did not permit this consideration to subtract from the purity of her affection, or the tenderness of her anxiety. She resolved that no word or look of hers should ever reproach me with my misconduct. She had been accustomed to desire rank, and affluence, and indulgence for her children; that her son might run the career of glory which his forefathers ran, and that her daughters might unite their fates with what was
most

most illustrious and honourable in their native country. But, if she were disappointed in this, she was determined, as far as it should be in her power, to give them virtue and cheerfulness and content, a mind, that should find resources within itself, and call forth regard and esteem from the rest of mankind.

My recovery was fitful and precarious, sometimes appearing to be rapidly on the advance, and at others to threaten a total relapse. Among the expedients that Marguerite employed to re-excite the flumbering spark of reason, was that of paternal affection. Ever on the watch for a favourable opportunity, she sometimes brought to me her own little namesake, who, though only twelve months old, did not fail to discover unequivocal marks of that playfulness and gaiety which made so considerable a part of her con-

stitutional character. Her innocent smiles, her frolic and careless laughter, produced a responsive vibration that reached to my inmost heart. They were not unfrequently, powerful enough, to check the career of my fury, or to raise me from the lowest pitch of despondence. Julia wept for me, and Louisa endeavoured to copy the offices of kindness she was accustomed to see her mother perform: Charles, who conceived more fully than the rest the nature of my indisposition, was upon all occasions solicitous to be admitted into my presence, and attended me for the most part with speechless anxiety, while his watchful, glistening eye uttered volumes, without the assistance of words. His mother at length yielded to his importunity, and he became established the regular assistant of Bernardin in the care of my person. The restlessness and impetuosity he had hitherto

to

to manifested, seemed upon this occasion entirely to subside; hour after hour he willingly continued shut up in my chamber, eager for every opportunity of usefulness, and gratified with that complacence with which the human mind never fails to be impressed, when it regards its actions as beneficent, or approves its temper as compassionate.

The restoration of my health was greatly retarded by the melancholy impressions which necessarily offered themselves to my mind, when recollection resumed her seat. It was fortunate for me that this sort of retrospection appears not to be the first thing that occurs after a paroxysm of insanity. When the tide of incoherent ideas subsides, the soul is left in a state of exhaustion, and seems, by a sort of instinct, to shun the influx of tumultuous emotions, and to dwell upon

such feelings as are mild, tranquil and restorative. Once however, when I was nearly recovered, the thought of what I had been, and the recollection of what I was, violently suggesting themselves to my mind, brought on a relapse attended with more alarming and discouraging symptoms than my original alienation. At that moment Marguerite was for the first time irresistibly struck with the conception that mine was an incurable lunacy; and, as she afterwards assured me, at no period down to that instant, had she felt herself so truly inconsolable. But even a sentiment of the last despair was incapable of superseding the active beneficence of Marguerite. Her assiduities, so far as related to this fatal calamity, were at length crowned with success. Her gloomy prognostics were not realised, and the distemper of my understanding quitted me for ever.

Wretched

Wretched however, as I have already remarked, beyond all common notions of wretchedness, were my thoughts, when my soul returned to its proper bias, and I fully surveyed the nature of my present situation. Marguerite, who, by her sagacity and patience, had recovered me from a state of the most dreadful disease, now exerted herself to effect the more arduous task of reconciling me to myself. She assured me that she forgave me from her inmost heart; nay, that she was thankful to providence, which, in the midst of what the world calls great calamities, had preserved to her what she most valued, my affection, entire. She contrasted what had been the subject of her apprehensions before she came to Paris, with what had proved to be the state of the case afterwards. She averred, that the worst that had happened was trivial and tolerable, compared

compared with the notion that her fears had delineated. She had feared to find my heart alienated from her, and herself a widowed mother to orphan children. She dreaded lest I should have proved myself worthless in her eyes, lest I should have been found to have committed to oblivion the most sacred of all duties, and, for the gratification of a low and contemptible caprice, sacrificed all pretensions to honour and character. For that indeed her heart would have bled; against that all the pride she derived from her ancestry and my own would have revolted; that would have produced a revulsion of her frame, snapping the chain of all her habits, and putting a violent close upon all the sentiments she had most fondly nourished. She dreaded indeed that she should not have survived it. But the mistake I had committed was of a very different

different nature. I had neither forgotten that I was a husband nor a father; I had only made an injudicious and unfortunate choice of the way of discharging what was due to these characters. What had passed was incapable of impeaching either the constancy of my affections, or the integrity of my principles. She forgave me, and it was incumbent upon me to forgive myself.

She assured me that poverty, in her apprehension, was a very slight evil, and she appealed to my own understanding for the soundness of her judgment. She bid me look round upon the peasantry of the neighbourhood, upon a footing with whom we were now placed, and ask my own heart whether they were not happy. One disadvantage indeed they were subjected to, the absence of cultivation and learning. She could never bring herself

herself to believe that ignorance was a benefit; she saw the contrary of this practically illustrated in her own case, in mine, and in that of all the persons to whom through life she had been most ardently attached. She wished her children to attain intellectual refinement, possess fully the attributes of a rational nature, and to be as far removed as possible from the condition of stocks and stones, by accumulating a magazine of thoughts, and by a rich and cultivated sensibility. But the want of fortune did not in our case, as in the case of so many others, shut them out from this advantage: it was in our own power to bestow it upon them.

It was the part of a reasonable man, she told me, not to waste his strength in useless regrets for what was past, and had already eluded his grasp; but to advert to the blessings he had still
in

in possession. If we did this in our present situation, we should find every reason for contentment and joy. Our pleasure in each other, and the constancy of our attachment, was unaffailed and unimpaired. Where were there two married persons, she would venture to ask, who had more reason to applaud their connection, or to whom their connection was pregnant with so various gratifications? From ourselves, we had only to turn our thoughts to our children; and we were surely as singularly fortunate in this respect, as in each other. Charles, who had always been the subject of our pride, had lately exhibited such an example of patient sympathy and filial affection, as perhaps had never been equalled in a child so young. The sensibility of Julia, the understanding of Louisa, and the vivacity of Marguerite, were all of them so many
growing

growing sources of inexhaustible delight. Our children were intelligent, affectionate and virtuous. Thus circumstanced, she intreated me not to indulge that jaundice of the imagination, which should create to itself a sentiment of melancholy and discontent in the midst of this terrestrial paradise.

Most virtuous of women, now perhaps the purest and the brightest among the saints in heaven! why was I deaf to the soundness of your exhortations, and the generosity of your sentiments? Deaf indeed I was! A prey to the deepest dejection, they appeared to me the offspring of misapprehension and paradox! Supposing in the mean time that they were reasonable and just in the mouth of her who uttered them, I felt them as totally foreign to my own situation. The language, as they were, of innocence, it was not wonderful that

that to an innocent heart they spoke tranquillity and peace. Marguerite looked round upon the present rusticity and plainness of our condition, and every thing that she saw talked to her of her merit and her worth. If we were reduced, she was in no way accountable for that reduction; it had been the test of her magnanimity, her patience, and the immutableness of her virtue. She smiled at the assaults of adversity, and felt a merit in her smiles. How different was my situation! Every thing that I saw reminded me of my guilt, and upbraided me with crimes that it was hell to recollect. My own garb, and that of my wife and children, the desertion in which we lived, the simple benches, the unhewn rafters, the naked walls, all told me what it was I had done, and were so many echoes to my conscience, repeating, without intermission

sion and without end, its heart-breaking reproaches. Sleep was almost a stranger to me; these incessant monitors confounded my senses in a degree scarcely short of madness itself. It is the property of vice to convert every thing that should be consolation, into an additional source of anguish. The beauty, the capacity and the virtue of my children, the affection with which they regarded me, the patience and attentiveness and forbearance of their excellent mother, were all so many aggravations of the mischief I had perpetrated. I could almost have wished to have been the object of their taunts and execration. I could have wished to have been disengaged from the dearest charities of our nature, and to have borne the weight of my crimes alone. It would have been a relief to me, if my children had been covered with the most loathsome diseases, deformed and monstrous.

monstrous. It would have been a relief to me, if they had been abortive in understanding, and odious in propensities, if their hearts had teemed with every vice, and every day had marked them the predestined victims of infamy. The guilt of having stripped them of every external faculty would then have set light upon me. But thus to have ruined the most lovely family perhaps that existed on the face of the earth, the most exemplary of women, and children in whom I distinctly marked the bud of every excellence and every virtue, was a conduct that I could never forgive even to myself. Oh, Damville, Damville! best of men! truest of friends! why didst thou put thy trust in such a wretch as I am! Hadst thou no presentiment of the fatal consequences? Wert thou empowered to commit thy only child and all her possible offspring to so dreadful

dreadful risk? Indeed it was not well done! It was meant in kindness; but it was the cruellest mischief that could have been inflicted on me. I was not a creature qualified for such dear and tender connections. I was destined by nature to wander a solitary outcast on the face of the earth. For that only, that fearful misery, was I fitted. Why, misguided, misjudging man! didst thou not leave me to my fate? Even that would have been less dreadful than what I have experienced!—Wretch that I am! Why do I reproach my best benefactor? No, let me turn the whole current of my invective upon myself! Damville was actuated by the noblest and most generous sentiment that ever entered the human mind. What a return then have I made, and to what a benefit!

All the previous habits of my mind had taught me to feel my present circumstances,

cumstances with the utmost acuteness. Marguerite, the generous Marguerite, stood, with a soul almost indifferent, between the opposite ideas of riches and poverty. Not so her husband. I had been formed by every accident of my life, to the love of splendour. High, heroic feats, and not the tranquillity of rural retirement, or the pursuits of a character professedly literary, had been the food of my imagination, ever since the faculty of imagination was unfolded in my mind. The field of the cloth of gold, the siege and the battle of Pavia, were for ever present to my recollection. Francis the First, Bayard and Bourbon eternally formed the subject of my visions and reveries. These propensities had indeed degenerated into an infantine taste for magnificence and expence; but the roots did not embrace their soil the less forcibly, because

cause the branches were pressed down and diverted from their genuine perpendicular. That from a lord, descended from some of the most illustrious houses in France, and myself amply imbued with the high and disdainful spirit incident to my rank, I should become a peasant, was itself a sufficient degradation. But I call the heavens to witness that I could have endured this with patience, if I had endured it alone. I should have regarded it as the just retribution of my follies, and submitted with the most exemplary resignation. But I could not with an equal mind behold my wife and children involved in my punishment. I turned my eyes upon the partner of my life, and recalled with genuine anguish the magnificence to which she was accustomed, and the hopes to which she was born. I looked upon my children, the fruit of my loins, and
once,

once the pride of my heart, and recollected that they were paupers, rustics, exiles. I could foresee no return to rank, but for them and their posterity an interminable succession of obscurity and meanness. A real parent can support the calamity of personal degradation, but he cannot bear to witness and anticipate this corruption of his blood. At some times I honoured Marguerite for her equanimity. At others I almost despised her for this integrity of her virtues. I accused her in my heart of being destitute of the spark of true nobility. Her patience I considered as little less than meanness and vulgarity of spirit. It would have become her better, I thought, like me, to have cursed her fate, and the author of that fate; like me, to have spurned indignant at the slavery to which we were condemned; to have refused to be pacified, and to have wasted the last dregs of existence in impatience and regret.

I could act that which had involved us in this dire reverse; but I could not encounter the consequences of my act.

The state of my mind was in the utmost degree dejected and forlorn. I carried an arrow in my heart, which the kindness of my wife and children proved inadequate to extract, and the ranklings of which time itself had not the power to assuage. The wound was not mortal; but, like the wound of Philoctetes, poisoned with the blood of the Lernean Hydra, I dragged it about with me from year to year, and it rendered my existence a galling burthen hardly to be supported. A great portion of my time was passed in a deep and mournful silence, which all the soothing things that were addressed to me, could not prevail on me to break. Not that in this silence there was the least particle of ill-humour or sullenness. It was a mild and passive situation

tion of the mind; affectionate, as far as it was any thing, to the persons around me; but it was a species of disability; my soul had not force enough to give motion to the organs of speech, or scarcely to raise a finger. My eye only, and that only for a moment at a time, pleaded for forbearance and pardon. I seemed like a man in that species of distemper, in which the patient suffers a wasting of the bones, and at length presents to us the shadow, without the powers of a human body,

This was at some times my condition. But my stupour would at others suddenly subside. Mechanically, and in a moment, as it were, I shook off my supineness, and sought the mountains. The wildness of an untamed and savage scene best accorded with the temper of my mind. I sprung from cliff to cliff among the points of the rock. I rushed down precipices

that to my sobered sense appeared in a manner perpendicular, and only preserved my life, with a sort of inborn and unelective care, by catching at the roots and shrubs which occasionally broke the steepness of the descent. I hung over the tops of rocks still more fearful in their declivities, and courted the giddiness and whirl of spirit which such spectacles are accustomed to produce. I could not resolve to die: death had too many charms to suit the self-condemnation that pursued me. I found a horrible satisfaction in determining to live and to avenge upon myself the guilt I had incurred. I was far from imagining that the evils I had yet suffered, were a mere sport and ostentation of misery, compared with those that were in reserve for me.

The state of mind I am here describing, was not madness, nor such as could be mistaken for madness. I never

ver forgot myself, and what I was. I was never in that delirium of thought, in which the patient is restless and active without knowing what it is that he does, and from which, when roused, he suddenly starts, shakes off the dream that engaged him, and stands astonished at himself. Mine was a rage, guided and methodised by the discipline of despair. I burst into no fits of raving; I attempted no injury to any one. Marguerite therefore could not reconcile herself to the placing me under any restraint. I frequently returned home, with my clothes smeared with the soil, and torn by the briars. But my family soon became accustomed to my returning in personal safety; and therefore, whatever was the uneasiness my wife felt from my excursions, she preferred the enduring it, to the idea of imposing on me any species of violence.

The state of my family presented a singular contrast with that of its head. Marguerite was certainly not insensible to the opposition between her former and her present mode of life; but she submitted to the change with such an unaffected cheerfulness and composure as might have extorted admiration from malignity itself. She would perhaps have dismissed from her thoughts all retrospect to our former grandeur, had not the dejection and despair that seemed to have taken possession of my mind, forcibly and continually recalled it to her memory. For my sufferings I am well assured she felt the truest sympathy; but there was one consideration attending them that imperiously compelled her to task her fortitude. They deprived me of the ability of in any degree providing for and superintending my family; it became therefore incumbent upon her
to

to exert herself for the welfare of all. Had we never fallen under this astonishing reverse, I might have spent my whole life in daily intercourse with this admirable woman, without becoming acquainted with half the treasures of her mind. She was my steward; and from the result of her own reflections made the most judicious disposition of my property. She was my physician; not by administering medicines to my body, but by carefully studying and exerting herself to remove the distemper of my mind. Unfortunately no distempers are so obstinate as mental ones; yet, had my distemper had any lighter source than an upbraiding conscience, I am persuaded the wisdom of Marguerite would have banished it. She was the instructor of my children; her daughters felt no want of a governess; and I am even ready to doubt whether the lessons of his mother did^t

not amply supply to Charles his loss of an education in the university of Paris. The love of order, the activity, the industry, the cheerfulness of, let me say, this illustrious matron, became contagious to all the inhabitants of my roof. Once and again have I stolen a glance at them, or viewed them from a distance busied, sometimes gravely, sometimes gaily, in the plain, and have whispered to my bursting heart, How miserable am I! how happy they! So insurmountable is the barrier that divides innocence from guilt! They may breathe the same air; they may dwell under the same roof; they may be of one family and one blood; they may associate with each other every day and every hour; but they can never assimilate, never have any genuine contact. Is there a happier family than mine in all the vallies of this far-famed republic? Is there a family
more

more virtuous, or more cultivated with all the refinements that conduce to the true dignity of man? I, I only am its burthen, and its stain! The pleasure with which I am furrounded on every side, finds a repellent quality in my heart that will not suffer its approach. To whatever is connected with me I communicate misfortune. Whenever I make my appearance, those countenances that at all other times spoke contentment and hilarity, fall into sadness. Like a pestilential wind, I appear to breathe blast to the fruits of nature, and sickness to its aspect.

Marguerite expostulated with me in the most soothing manner upon the obstinacy of my malady. My Reginald! my love! said she, cease to be unhappy, or to reproach yourself! You were rash in the experiment you made upon the resources of your family. But have

you done us mischief, or have you conferred a benefit? I more than half incline to the latter opinion. Let us at length dismiss artificial tastes, and idle and visionary pursuits, that do not flow in a direct line from any of the genuine principles of our nature!. Here we are surrounded with sources of happiness. Here we may live in true patriarchal simplicity. What is chivalry, what are military prowess and glory? Believe me, they are the passions of a mind depraved, that with ambitious refinement seeks to be wise beyond the dictates of sentiment or reason! There is no happiness so solid, or so perfect, as that which disdains these refinements. You, like me, are fond of the luxuriant and romantic scenes of nature. Here we are placed in the midst of them. How idle it would be, to wish to change our arbours, our verdant lanes and thickets,

thickets, for vaulted roofs, and gloomy halls, and massy plate? Alas, Reginald! it is I fear too true, that the splendour in which we lately lived, has its basis in oppression; and that the superfluities of the rich, are a boon extorted from the hunger and misery of the poor! Here we see a peasantry more peaceful and less oppressed, than perhaps any other tract of the earth can exhibit. They are erect and independent, at once friendly and fearless. Is not this a refreshing spectacle? I now begin practically to perceive that the cultivators of the fields and the vineyards, are my brethren and my sisters; and my heart bounds with joy, as I feel my relations to society multiply. How cumbrous is magnificence? The moderate man is the only free. He who reduces all beneath him to a state of servitude, becomes himself the slave of his establishment, and of all

his domestics. To diminish the cases in which the assistance of others is felt absolutely necessary, is the only genuine road to independence. We can now move wherever we please without waiting the leisure of others. Our simple repasts require no tedious preparation, and do not imprison us in saloons and eating rooms. Yet we partake of them with a more genuine appetite, and rise from them more truly refreshed, than from the most sumptuous feast. I prepare for my meal by industry and exercise; and, when it is over, amuse myself with my children in the fields and the shade.— Though I love the sight of the peasants, I would not be a peasant. I would have a larger stock of ideas, and a wider field of activity. I love the sight of peasants only for their accessories or by comparison. They are comparatively more secure than any other

other large masses of men, and the scenes in the midst of which they are placed are delightful to sense. But I would not sacrifice in prone oblivion the best characteristics of my nature. I put in my claim for refinements and luxuries; but they are the refinements and purifying of intellect, and the luxuries of uncostly, simple taste. I would incite the whole world, if I knew how to do it, to put in a similar claim. I would improve my mind; I would enlarge my understanding; I would contribute to the instruction of all connected with me, and to the mass of human knowledge. The pleasures I would pursue and disseminate, though not dependent on a large property, are such as could not be understood by the rustic and the savage.—Our son, bred in these fields indeed, will probably never become a *preux chevalier*, or figure in the roll of military heroes.

But

But he may become something happier and better. He may improve his mind, and cultivate his taste. He may be the counsellor and protector of his sisters. He may be the ornament of the district in which he resides. He may institute in his adoptive country, new defences for liberty, new systems of public benefit, and new improvements of life. There is no character more admirable than the patriot-yeoman, who unites with the utmost simplicity of garb and manners, an understanding fraught with information and sentiment, and a heart burning with the love of mankind. Such were Fabricius and Regulus among the ancients, and such was Tell, the founder of the Helvetic liberty. For my part, I am inclined to be thankful, that this unexpected reverse in our circumstances, has made me acquainted with new pleasures, and opened to my mind

mind an invaluable lesson. If you could but be prevailed on to enter into our pleasures, to dismiss idle reproaches and pernicious propensities, our happiness would then be complete.

The expostulations of Marguerite often excited my attention, often my respect, and sometimes produced a sort of imperfect conviction. But the conviction was transient, and the feelings I have already described as properly my own, returned, when the fresh and vivid impression of what I had heard was gone. It was in vain that I heard the praises of simplicity and innocence. I was well pleased to see those who were nearest to me, not affecting contentment, but really contented with these things. But I could not be contented for them. The lessons of my education had left too deep an impression. I could myself have surrendered my claim to admiration and homage,

as

as a penance for my misdeeds: but I could not figure to myself a genuine satisfaction unaccompanied by these accessories; and this satisfaction I obstinately and impatiently coveted for those I loved.

CHAP. VIII.

WHILE I murmured in bitterness of soul at the lowness to which my family was reduced, a still heavier calamity impended, as if in vengeance against the fantastic refinements of distresses over which I brooded.

I was wandering, as I had often done, with a gloomy and rebellious spirit, among the rocks, a few miles distant from the place of our habitation. It was the middle of summer. The weather had been remarkably fine; but I disdained to allow the gratifications which arise from a pure atmosphere and a serene sky, to find entrance in my soul. My excursions had for some days been incessant; and the sun, which matured the corn and blackened the
the

the grapes around, had imbrowned my visage, and boiled in my blood. I drank in fierceness and desperation from the fervour of his beams. One night, as in fullen mood I watched his setting from a point of the rock, I perceived the clearness of the day subsiding in a threatening evening. The clouds gathered in the west, and, as night approached, were overspread with a deep dye of the fiercest crimson. The wind rose, and, during the hours of darkness, its roarings were hollow and tempestuous.

In the morning the clouds were hurried rapidly along, and the air was changed from a long series of sultriness to a nipping cold. This change of the atmosphere I disregarded, and pursued my rambles. A little before noon however, the air suddenly grew so dark, as to produce a sensation perfectly tremendous. I felt as if the darkest night had never exceeded it. The impetuous
motion

motion to which I had been impelled, partly by the fever in my blood, and partly by the turbulence of the season, was suspended. Mechanically I looked round me for shelter. But I could ill distinguish the objects that were near me, when a flash of lightning, blue and sulphureous, came directly in my face, with a brightness that threatened to extinguish the organ of vision. The thunder that followed was of a length and loudness to admit of no comparison from any object with which I am acquainted. The bursts were so frequent as almost to confound themselves with each other. At present, I thought only of myself; and the recent habits of my mind were not calculated to make me peculiarly accessible to fear. I stood awe-struck; but rather with the awe that inheres to a cultivated imagination, than that which consists in apprehension. I seemed

seemed ready to mount amidst the clouds, and penetrate the veil with which nature conceals her operations. I would have plunged into the recesses in which the storm was engendered, and bared my bosom to the streaming fire. Meanwhile my thoughts were solemnised and fixed by observing the diversified dance of the lightnings upon the points of the rocks, contrasting as they did in the strongest manner with the darkness in which the rest of the scene was enveloped. This added contention of the elements, did not however suspend the raging of the wind. Presently a storm of mingled hail and rain poured from the clouds, and was driven with inconceivable impetuosity. The hail-stones were of so astonishing a magnitude, that, before I was aware, I was beaten by them to the ground. Not daring to attempt to rise again, I simply endeavoured to
place

place myself in such a manner as might best protect me from their violence. I therefore remained prostrate, listening to the force with which they struck upon the earth, and feeling the rebound of their blows from different parts of my body.

In about twenty minutes the shower abated, and in half an hour was entirely over. When I began to move, I was surprised at the sensation of soreness which I felt in every part of me. I raised myself upon my elbow, and saw the hail-stones, in some places lying in heaps like hillocks of ice, while in others they had ploughed up the surface, and buried themselves in the earth. As I looked further, I perceived immense trees torn from their roots, and thrown to a great distance upon the declivity. To the noise which they made in their descent, which must have been astonishingly great,

great, I had been at the time insensible. Such were the marks which the tempest had left upon the mountains. In the plain it was still worse. I could perceive the soil for long spaces together converted into a morass, the standing corn beaten down and buried in the mud, the vines torn into a thousand pieces, the fruit-trees demolished, and even in some places the animals themselves, lambs, sheep and cows, strewing the fields with their mangled carcases. The whole hopes of the year over which my eyes had glanced a few minutes before, for it was near the period of harvest, were converted into the most barren and dreary scene that any quarter of the globe ever witnessed. I was mounted upon a considerable eminence, and had an extensive prospect of this horrible devastation.

As I stood gazing in mute astonishment, suddenly a fear came over me
that

that struck dampness to my very heart. What was the situation of my own family and their little remaining property, amidst this dreadful ruin? I was in a position, where, though I nearly faced our habitation, a point of the rock intercepted it from my sight. The obstacle was but a small one, yet it would require a considerable circuit to overcome. I flew along the path, with a speed that scarcely permitted me to breathe. When I had passed the upper rock, the whole extensive scene opened upon me in an instant. What were my sensations, when I perceived that the devastation had been even more complete here, than on the side where I first viewed it! My own cottage in particular, which that very morning had contained, and I hoped continued to contain, all that was most dear to my heart, seemed to stand an
entire

entire solitude in the midst of an immense swamp.

Marguerite, whose idea, upon our retreat into Switzerland, had been that of conforming without reserve to the new situation that was allotted us, had immediately expended the whole of what remained from the shipwreck of our fortune, in the purchase of the cottage in which we dwelt, and a small portion of land around it, sufficient with economy for the support of our family. Under her direction the hills had been covered with vines, and the fields with corn. She had purchased cows to furnish us with milk, and sheep with their fleeces, and had formed her establishment upon the model of the Swiss peasantry in our neighbourhood. Reverting to the simplicity of nature appeared to her like building upon an immoveable basis, which the clash of nations could
not

not destroy, and which was too humble to fear the treachery of courts, or the caprice of artificial refinement.

It was all swept away in a moment. Our little property looked as if it had been particularly a mark for the vengeance of heaven, and was more utterly destroyed than any of the surrounding scenes. There was not a tree left standing; there was not a hedge or a limit that remained within or around it; chaos had here resumed his empire, and avenged himself of the extraordinary order and beauty it had lately displayed.

I was not overwhelmed with this astonishing spectacle. At that moment nature found her way to my heart, and made a man of me. I made light of, these petty accessories of our existence; and the thought of my wife and my children, simply as they were in themselves, filled every avenue of

my heart. For them, and them alone, I was interested : it was a question for their lives. To conceive of what they might personally have sustained, was a horror that seemed to freeze up all the arteries of my heart. I descended from the mountain. It was with the greatest difficulty, and not without many circuitous deviations that I proceeded, so much was the surface changed, and so deep and miry the swamps. My terror increased, as I passed near to the carcases of the animals who had fallen victims to this convulsion of the elements. I observed with inconceivable alarm that the dead or wounded bodies of some human beings, were intermingled with the brute destruction. I staid not to enquire whether they were yet in a state to require assistance ; the idea that had taken possession of me, left no room for the sentiment of general humanity.

A little

A little further on I distinctly remarked the body of a woman at some distance from any habitation, who appeared to be dead, destroyed by the storm. Near her lay a female infant, apparently about six years of age. My attention was involuntarily arrested; I thought of Louisa, that sweet and amiable child, so like her admirable mother. The figure was hers; the colour of the robe corresponded to that in which I last saw her. The child was lying on her face. With all the impatient emotions of a father, I stooped down. I turned over the body, that I might identify my child. It was still warm; life had scarcely deserted it. I gazed upon the visage; it was distorted with the agonies of death; but enough to convince me still remained discernible; it was not Louisa!

I can scarcely recollect a period through all the strange vicissitudes of my existence to be compared with this. If I had not felt what I then felt, I could never have conceived it. Human nature is so constituted, that the highest degree of anguish, an anguish in which the heart stretches itself to take in the mightiness of its woe, can be felt but for a few instants. When the calamity we feared is already arrived, or when the expectation of it is so certain as to shut out hope, there seems to be a principle within us by which we look with misanthropic composure on the state to which we are reduced, and the heart suddenly contracts and accommodates itself to what it most abhorred. Our hopes wither; and our pride, our self-complacence, all that taught us to rejoice in existence, wither along with them. But, when hope yet struggles with
despair,

despair, or when the calamity abruptly announces itself, then is the true contention, the tempest and uproar of the soul too vast to be endured.

This sentiment of ineffable wretchedness I experienced, when I stooped down over the body of the imaginary Louisa, and when I hastened to obtain the certainty which was of all things most terrible to me. The termination of such a moment of horror, is scarcely less memorable than its intrinsic greatness. In an instant the soul recovers its balance, and the thought is as if it has never been. I clapped my hands in an extacy at once of joy and astonishment, so sure did I seem to have made myself of my misfortune; I quitted the body with an unburthened heart; I flew towards my home, that I might ascertain whether I was prematurely speaking comfort to my spirit.

At length I reached it. I saw the happy groupe assembled at the door. Marguerite had entertained the same terrors for me, with which I had myself so lately been impressed. We flew into each other's arms. She hid her face in my neck, and sobbed audibly. I embraced each of the children in turn, but Louisa with the most heartfelt delight. Are you safe, papa? Are you safe, my child? were echoed on every side. A spectator, unacquainted with what was passing in our hearts, would certainly have stood astonished to see the transport with which we exulted, surrounded as we were with desolation and ruin.

After an interval however we opened our eyes, and began to ruminate upon the new condition in which we were placed. Marguerite and myself watched each other's countenances with anxiety to discover what were likely to be

be the feelings of either in this terrible crisis. Be of good heart, my love! said Marguerite. Do not suffer the accident which has happened, entirely to overcome you! There was a mixed compassion, tenderness and anxiety in the tone of voice with which she uttered these words, that was inexpressibly delightful.

No, Marguerite, replied I, with enthusiastic impetuosity, I am not cast down; I never shall be cast down again! Ruin is nothing to me, so long as I am surrounded with you and our dear children. I have for some time been a fool. In the midst of every real blessing, I have fashioned for myself imaginary evils. But my eyes are now opened. How easily is the human mind induced to forget those benefits, with which we are constantly surrounded, and our possession of which we regard as secure! The feelings of this morning have awaken-

ed me. I am now cured of my folly. I have learned to value my domestic blessings as I ought. Having preserved them, I esteem myself to have lost nothing. What are gold and jewels and precious utensils? Mere dross and dirt! The human face and the human heart, reciprocations of kindness and love, and all the nameless sympathies of our nature, these are the only objects worth being attached to. What are rank and station, the homage of the multitude and the applause of fools? Let me judge for myself! The value of a man is in his intrinsic qualities, in that of which power cannot strip him, and which adverse fortune cannot take away. That for which he is indebted to circumstances, is mere trapping and tinsel. I should love these precious and ingenuous creatures before me better, though in rags, than the children of kings in all the pomp of ornament. I
am

am proud to be their father. Whatever may be my personal faults, the world is my debtor for having been the occasion of their existence. But they are endeared to me by a better principle than pride. I love them for their qualities. He that loves, and is loved by, a race of pure and virtuous creatures, and that lives continually in the midst of them, is an idiot, if he does not think himself happy. Surrounded as I am now surrounded, I feel as irremovable as the pillars of creation. Nothing that does not strike at their existence, can affect me with terror.

Marguerite viewed me with surprise and joy. Now indeed, said she, you are the man I took you for, and the man I shall henceforth be prouder than ever to call my husband. The sorrow in which you lately indulged, was a luxury; and we must have done with

luxuries. You will be our protector and our support.

Thus saying, she took me by the hand, and motioned me to view with her the devastation that had been committed. There was one path I had discovered, in which we might proceed some way with tolerable ease. The scene was terrible. We were indeed beggars. A whole province had been destroyed. All the corn and the fruits of the earth; most of the trees; in many places cattle; in some places men. Persons who had been rich in the morning, saw all the produce of their fields annihilated, and were unable even to guess by what process fertility was to be re-established. The comparatively wealthy scarcely knew how they were to obtain immediate subsistence; the humbler class, who always live by the expedients of the day, saw nothing before them but the prospect

prospect of perishing with hunger. We witnessed in one or two instances the anguish of their despair.

Our prospect was scarcely in any respect better than theirs; yet we felt differently. We were more impressed with the joy of our personal escape. As my error respecting the value of externals had been uncommonly great, the sudden revolution of opinion I experienced was equally memorable. The survey indeed that we took of the general distress somewhat saddened our hearts; but the sadness it gave, was that of sobriety, not of dejection.

It was incumbent upon us to make a strict examination into the amount of our property, and our immediate resources; and in this office I united myself with Marguerite, not only with a degree of cheerfulness and application, the perfect contrast of my whole conduct ever since our arrival in Switzerland,

erland, but which greatly exceeded any thing I had ever before exhibited in a business of this nature. We found that, though all our hopes of a harvest were annihilated, yet we were not destitute of the instant means of subsistence. The resources we possessed, whether in money or provisions, that were our dependence till the period when the new produce should supply their place, were uninjured. Our implements of husbandry remained as before. The land was not impoverished, but had rather derived additional fertility from the effects of the storm. What we had lost was chiefly the produce of our capital for one year, together with a part of that capital itself in the live stock that had been destroyed. This was a loss which a certain degree of care and scope in our external circumstances might easily have enabled us to supply. But the principle

principle of supply was denied us. It was with considerable difficulty that all the economy of Marguerite had enabled her to support our family establishment, while every thing of this kind had gone on prosperously. Such a shock as the present we were totally disqualified to surmount. It compelled us to a complete revolution of our affairs.

Many indeed of our neighbours had scarcely any greater advantage in their private affairs than ourselves. But they possessed one superiority that proved of the greatest importance in this conjuncture; they were natives of the state in which they resided. In the cantons of Switzerland, the destruction of the fruits of the earth, occasioned by inclement seasons and tempests, is by no means unfrequent; and it is therefore customary in plentiful years, to lay up corn in public magazines,
that

that the people may not perish in periods of scarcity. These magazines are placed under the inspection and disposal of the magistracy; and the inhabitants looked to them with confidence for the supply of their need. No storm however had occurred in the memory of man so terrible and ruinous as the present; and it became evident that the magazines would prove a resource too feeble for the extent of the emergency.

The storm had spread itself over a space of many leagues in circumference, not only in the canton of Soleure, but in the neighbouring cantons, particularly that of Berne. The sufferers in our own canton only, amounted to scarcely less than ten thousand. While the women and children for the most part remained at home, the houses having in general suffered little other damage than the destruction of their windows,

windows, the fathers of families repaired to the seat of government to put in their claims for national relief; and these alone formed an immense troop, that threatened little less than to besiege the public magazines and the magistrates. An accurate investigation was entered into of the losses of each, it being the purpose of government, as far as its power extended, not only to supply the people with the means of immediate subsistence, but also, by disbursements from the public treasury, to recruit the stock of cattle, and to assist every one to return, with revived hopes and expectation, to the sphere of his industry. The purpose was no doubt benevolent; but in the mean time the unhappy victims found in uncertainty and expectation a real and corroding anguish.

I advanced my claim with the rest, but met with a peremptory refusal.

The

The harsh and rigorous answer I received, was, that they had not enough for their own people, and could spare nothing to strangers. Upon this occasion I was compelled to feel what it was to be an alien, and how different the condition in which I was now placed, from that I had filled in my native country. There I had lived in the midst of a people, to whom the veneration of my ancestry and name seemed a part of their nature. They had witnessed for several years the respectable manner in which I lived; the virtues of Marguerite were familiar to them; and they took an interest in every thing that concerned us, a sentiment that confessed us at once for kindred and patrons. It was the turn of mind only which is generated by rank, that had compelled us to quit their vicinity; we might have continued in it, if not in affluence, at least,

least enjoying the gratifications that arise from general affection and respect. But here we were beheld with an eye of jealousy and distaste. We had no prejudice of birth and habit in our favour; indeed, in the reverse of fortune which had brought us hither, Marguerite had been less desirous of obtruding, than of withdrawing from the public eye, the circumstance of our rank. We were too recent inmates to have secured by any thing of a personal nature an advantageous opinion among our neighbours. They saw only a miserable and distracted father of a family, and a mother who, in spite of the simplicity she cultivated, sufficiently evinc'd that she had been accustomed to a more elevated situation. The prepossessions of mankind are clearly unfavourable to a new-comer, an emigrant who has quitted his former connections and the scenes
of

of his youth. They are unavoidably impelled to believe, that his taking up his abode in another country, must be owing to a weak and discreditable caprice, if it be not owing to something still more disadvantageous to his character.

The calamity therefore which we had suffered in common with most of the inhabitants of the province, finally reduced us to the necessity of a second emigration. The jealousy with which we were regarded, daily became more visible and threatening. Though, in consequence of the distribution made by order of the state, the price of commodities was not so much increased as might have been expected, we were considered as interlopers upon the portion of the natives; the sellers could with difficulty be persuaded to accommodate us, and the bystanders treated us with murmurs and reviling. While
we

we were deliberating what course to pursue in this emergency, certain officers of government one morning entered our habitation, producing an order of the senate for our immediate removal out of the territory. It is of the essence of coercive regulations, to expel, to imprison and turn out of prison, the individuals it is thought proper to control, without any care as to the mischiefs they may suffer, and whether they perish under or survive the evil inflicted on them. We were accordingly allowed only from six in the morning till noon, to prepare for our departure. Our guards indeed offered to permit me to remain three days to wind up my affairs, upon condition that my wife and children were instantly removed into another country, as a sort of hostages for my own departure. This indulgence however would have been useless. In the present
sent

sent state of the country no purchaser could be found for the little estate I possessed, and, if there could, it must doubtless have been disposed of to great disadvantage at such an emergency. I know not how we should have extricated ourselves out of these difficulties, if a member of the senate, who, being one of my nearest neighbours had been struck with admiration of the virtues of Marguerite, and with compassion for my family, had not paid me a visit shortly after the arrival of the officers, and generously offered to take upon himself the care of my property, and to advance me what money might be necessary for my emigration. This offer, which at any other time might have been regarded as purely a matter of course, under the present circumstances, when capital was so necessary for the revival of agriculture in the desolated country, implied

implied a liberal and disinterested spirit. I accepted the kindness of my neighbour in both its parts, but for the reimbursement of his loan referred him to the French minister to the United Cantons, who, under all the circumstances of the case, and taking my estate as security for the money advanced, I thought it reasonable to believe would attend to my application.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

MY affairs being thus far adjusted, I took leave of my late habitation, and set off with my wife and children the same afternoon. In the evening we arrived at Basle, where we were permitted to remain that night, and the next morning were conducted in form out at the north gate of the city, where our attendants quitted us, with a fresh prohibition under the severest penalties, if we were found within the ensuing twelve months in any of the territories of the Helvetic republic.

Marguerite and myself had already formed our plan. We began with dismissing both our servants. An attendant was no longer necessary to me, nor a nurse for the infant. The suggestion

of

of this measure originated in myself. My temper at this time, as I have already said, underwent a striking change. I was resolved to be happy; I was resolved to be active. It was hard to part with persons so long familiar to us, and who appeared rather in the character of humble friends, than domestics; but an imperious necessity demanded it. Let us, said I to Marguerite, increase and secure our happiness by diminishing our wants. I will be your husbandman and your labourer; you may depend upon my perseverance. My education has fitted me to endure hardship and fatigue, though the hardships then thought of were of a different nature. You have ever delighted in active usefulness; and will not, I know, repine at this accumulation of employment. Let us accommodate ourselves to our circumstances. Our children, I perceive,

ceive, are fated to be peasants, and will therefore be eminently benefited by the example of patience and independence we shall set before them.

The next object of our plan related to the choice of our future place of residence. This originated with Marguerite. She had heard much of the beauty and richness of the country bordering on the lake of Constance, and she thought that, while we denied ourselves expensive pleasures, or rather while they were placed out of our reach, there would be a propriety in our procuring for ourselves a stock of those pleasures which would cost us nothing. This was a refinement beyond me, and serves to evince the superiority which Marguerite's virtue and force of mind still retained over mine. The virtue I had so recently adopted was a strenuous effort. I rather resolved to be happy, than could
strictly

strictly be said to be happy. I loved my children indeed with an unfeigned affection. It was with sincerity that I professed to prefer them to all earthly possessions. But vanity and ostentation were habits wrought into my soul, and might be said to form part of its essence. I could not, but by the force of constant recollection, keep them out of my wishes and hopes for the future. I could not, like Marguerite, suffer my thoughts, as it were, to riot and wanton in the pleasures of poverty. I could only reconcile myself to my fate by a sort of gloomy firmness. The tranquillity I seemed to have attained, was an unnatural state of my soul, to which it was necessary that I should resolutely hold myself down, and from which my thoughts appeared ever upon the alert to escape. Bitter experience had at length taught me a hard lesson, and that lesson I was determined

VOL. I. N terminated

terminated to practise, whatever pangs my resignation might cost me.

We proceeded without hesitation in the direction we had resolved to pursue. Our whole journey exceeded the space of forty leagues in extent, and the expence necessarily attendant upon it, (our family, even after its reduction, consisting of no less than six persons) drained our purse of a great part of the money which had been supplied to us by the benevolent senator. But he had agreed to undertake the disposing of the property we were obliged to leave behind us, and in the mean time, if any considerable interval occurred before that was accomplished, to furnish us with the sums that should be necessary for our subsistence. We placed the utmost reliance upon his fidelity, and dismissed from our minds all anxiety respecting the interval which our banishment had interposed

interposed between us and the resources necessary for our future settlement.

Upon our arrival at Constance, we found a letter from our friend; and, though he transmitted to us no fresh supply, the complexion of his communication was upon the whole so encouraging, as to determine us, with no other delay than that of four days rest from our journey, to pass to the other side of the lake, and explore for ourselves a situation suitable to our design. The western bank of the lake, with the exception only of the city of Constance, was part of the *pays conquis* of the United Cantons; the eastern bank was a territory dependent on the government of that city. It was in this territory that we purposed fixing our residence; and we trusted that our affairs would shortly be put in a train to enable us to take possession of the spot we should select.

Thus driven once more into flight by the pressure of misfortune, and compelled to exchange for a land unknown the scenes which familiarity might have endeared, or tender recollections have made interesting, we did not sink under the weight of our adversity. This removal was not like our last. Switzerland was to none of us endeared like the vales of St. Leon. I was not now goaded and tormented by conscious guilt in the degree I had then been; Marguerite was not afflicted by the spectacle of my misery. Our present change, though it might be denominated a fall, was light in comparison with the former. The composure I had gained was new to me, and had to my own mind all the gloss of novelty. To my companions it proved contagious; they were astonished at my serenity, and drew from it an unwonted lightness of heart.

Thus

Thus circumstanced, our tour had its charms for us all, and there are few passages of my life that I have felt more agreeably. The lake itself is uncommonly beautiful, and its environs are fertile and interesting. It is surrounded with an abundance of towns, villages, country-seats and monasteries, sufficient to adorn and diversify the view, but not to exclude the sweetness of a rural scenery, or the grand features of nature. We coasted a considerable part of the lake, that we might judge in some degree, previously to our landing, which part of the shore promised best to yield us the object we sought. The autumn was now commencing; the air was liquid and sweet; the foliage was rich and varied; and the vine-covered hills exhibited a warmth and luxuriance of colouring, that no other object of nature or art is able to cope with. Surrounded with these

N 3

these objects, I sat in my boat in the midst of my children ; and, as I was but just awakened to an observation of their worth and my own happiness, I viewed them with a transport that would be ill illustrated by being compared with the transport of a miser over his new-recovered treasure from the bowels of the deep.

Oh, poverty ! exclaimed I, with elevated and unconquerable emotion, if these are the delights that attend thee, willingly will I resign the pomp of palaces and the splendour of rank to whoever shall deem them worth his acceptance ! Henceforth I desire only to dedicate myself to the simplicity of nature and the genuine sentiments of the heart. I will enjoy the beauty of scenes cultivated by other hands than mine, or that are spread out before me by the author of the universe. I will sit in the midst of my children, and
revel

revel in the luxury of domestic affections; pleasures these, that may be incumbered, but cannot be heightened, by all that wealth has in its power to bestow! Wealth serves no other purpose than to deprave the soul, and adulterate the fountains of genuine delight.

Such was the spirit of exultation with which my mind was at this time filled. I am sensible that it was only calculated to be transitory. I might learn to be contented; I was not formed to be satisfied in obscurity and a low estate.

Thus happy and thus amused, we spent two days in coasting the lake, landing frequently for the purposes either of variety or enquiry, and regularly passing the night on shore. On the evening of the second day, we were struck with the neat appearance and pleasing situation of a cottage,

N 4

which

which we discovered in our rambles, about a mile and a half from the lake. We found that it was to be sold, and it seemed precisely to correspond with the wishes we had formed. It was at a considerable distance from any populous neighbourhood, the nearest town being that of Merspurgh, the usual residence of the bishops of Constance, which was distant from this spot not less than three leagues. The cottage was situated in a valley, the hills being for the most part crowned with rich and verdant foliage, their sides covered with vineyards and corn, and a clear, transparent rivulet murmuring along from east to west. In the distance a few similar cottages discovered themselves, and in front there was an opening between the hills, just wide enough to show us a few sails as they floated along the now even surface of the lake. We approached the cottage, and found
in

in it only one person, an interesting girl of nineteen, who had resided there from her birth, and had been employed for the last four years in attendance upon the closing scene of her mother. Her mother had been dead only a few weeks, and she was upon the point of removing, as she told us, to the house of a brother, the best creature in the world, who was already married, and had a family of children. While we were talking with her, we perceived a fine boy of about eleven years of age skipping along the meadow. He proved to be her nephew, and hastened to say that his father and Mr. Henry were just behind, and would be with her in a few minutes. We waited their arrival, and it was easy to see that Mr. Henry was by no means an indifferent object in the eyes of the beautiful orphan: she had probably conditioned that he should permit her to remain

single, as long as she could be of any use to her mother. The lovers were well satisfied that the girl's brother should be taken aside, that I might talk over with him the affair of the cottage. We made a tour of the fields that were part of the property of the deceased, and the terms of our intended purchase were easily adjusted.

Though we had now accomplished the immediate purpose of our expedition, yet, as we had found unusual exhilaration and sweetness in the objects it presented to us, we came to a resolution of continuing it still further, and completing the circuit of the lake. We were aware that it would be vain as yet to expect to receive the money requisite for completing our purchase; and, as no pleasure, merely in the way of relaxation, could be more delightful than that we were now enjoying, so was it impossible that we could

could fill up our time in a more frugal manner than in this little voyage. Our gratification was not less, but more perfect, because it consisted of simple, inartificial, unbought amusements. The scenes around us were refreshing and invigorating; they were calculated, temporarily at least, to inspire gaiety and youth into decrepitude itself. Amidst these scenes we forgot our sorrows; they were a kind of stream, in which weariness and dejection plunged their limbs, and came forth untired and alert. They awakened in the mind all its most pleasing associations. Having already, as we believed, chosen the place of our future residence, we busied ourselves in imagining all the accompaniments that would grow out of it. We determined that poverty with health would not fail to be attended with its portion of pleasures. The scenes of nature were all our

own; nor could wealth give them a more perfect, or a firmer, appropriation. The affections and charities of habitude and consanguinity we trusted we should feel uninterrupted; uncumbered with the ceremonies and trappings of life, and in that rural plainness which is their genial soil.

After a leisurely and delightful voyage of six days, we returned to Constance. We expected to have found on our return some further intelligence from the beneficent senator, but in this we were disappointed. The imagination however easily suggested to us a variety of circumstances that might have delayed the business he had undertaken; and it was no forced inference to suppose that he deferred writing, because he had nothing important to communicate. At first therefore we suffered little uneasiness from the delay; but, as time proceeded, and the
2 silence

silence of our protector continued, the affair began to assume a more serious aspect. The little stock we had brought with us in our exile, was in a rapid progress of decay. We had managed it with frugality, though not at first with that anxious solicitude, the necessity of which we now began to apprehend. We had procured for ourselves two small and inconvenient apartments in an obscure alley of the city of Constance. We were in the act of meditating what steps it would be necessary to take in this unfortunate emergency, when intelligence was brought us of the sudden decease of the person upon whose kindness and exertions we depended.

He was succeeded in his estate by his nephew, a man of whom we had heard something during our residence in the neighbourhood, and whose habits we understood to be diametrically
the

the reverse of his predecessor's. In short, he had been represented to us as illiberal, morose, selfish and litigious, a man who, having suffered in one part of his life the hardships of poverty, scrupled no means, honourable or otherwise, of removing it to the greatest practicable distance. He had already reaped the succession some weeks, when we heard of the event that put him in possession of it; and the letters which I had more than once addressed to our protector, had probably fallen into his hands. These circumstances afforded no favourable augury of the treatment we might expect from him. The first thing which seemed proper was to write to him, which I accordingly did. I acquainted him with the nature of the transaction between myself and his uncle, and signified how necessary it was that we should come to a conclusion as speedily as possible.

I repre-

I represented to him pathetically the condition to which I was born, and the opulence in which I had passed many years of my life, together with the contrast afforded by the present reduced and urgent circumstances of my family. I intreated him to exert his generosity and justice in behalf of an unfortunate exile, whom untoward events had deprived of the power of doing justice to himself.

To this letter I received no answer. Uncertain as to the cause of my correspondent's silence, or even whether my letter had been received, I wrote again. My heart was wrung with this new adversity. I was forbidden under pain of perpetual imprisonment to return to the territories of the republic, and I had no friend to solicit in my behalf. In Constance I was utterly a stranger. In Switzerland my unfortunate habits of life, the depression and
solitude

solitude in which I had been merged, deprived me of the opportunity of forming connections. The deceased was the only person who had been disposed to interfere for me. It was too probable that the silence of his successor was an indication of the hostility of his views. I saw nothing before me but the prospect of my family perishing with want, deprived of their last resource, exiles and penniless. Thus destitute and forlorn, what could we do? to what plan could we have recourse? We had not so much as the means of providing ourselves with the implements of the humblest labour. If we had, could I, under my circumstances, resolve upon this? Could I give up the last slender pittance of my children while there was a chance of recovering it; and, by surrendering them to the slavery of perpetual labour, surrender them to the lowest degree of ignorance

ignorance and degradation? No; I still clung to this final hope, and was resolved to undertake any thing, however desperate, rather than part with it. Such were my feelings; and, in the new letter which I now dispatched, I poured out all the anguish of my soul.

A reply to this letter was at length vouchsafed. The heir of my protector informed me, that he knew nothing of the business to which I alluded; that he had come into possession of the lands I described, together with the other property of his late uncle, and regarded himself as holding them by the same tenure; that he found in the accounts of the estate a sum of money advanced to me, which he might with the strictest justice regard as a debt, and pursue me for it accordingly. He should be liberal enough however so far to give credit to my story, and to con-
sider

sider the sum in question as advanced upon a pledge of land: in that case, I might regard myself as sufficiently fortunate, in having obtained even that amount at a time when, but for the humanity or weakness of his uncle, my estate would not have sold for a farthing. Meanwhile the forbearance which he proffered, would, he observed, depend upon my conduct, and be retracted, if I afforded him cause for resentment. He added, that he despised my menaces and commands, and that, If I took a single step against him, I should find it terminate in my utter ruin.

Nothing could be more profligate than the style of his letter. But its impotence was equal to its wickedness. It was absurd to threaten to inflict ruin, on a man whom ruin had already overtaken. Before the letter arrived, I had disbursed the whole sum I brought with me from Switzerland.

This

This entire annihilation of my resources seemed to steal on me unperceived. Finding that all reply to my importunity was either refused, or deferred to an uncertain period, I would willingly at all risks have fought the villain who thus obdurately devoted me and my family to destruction, and have endeavoured to obtain justice in person. But it was now too late. Before I felt the case thus desperate, my finances were so far reduced, as to make it impracticable for me to leave my wife and children enough to support them in my absence, even if I had determined myself to set out upon this perilous expedition penniless. I resolved that, if we did perish, we would perish together.

Penury was now advancing upon us with such rapid strides, that the lowest and most scanty resources no longer admitted of neglect. Had a case thus
desperate

desperate been encountered with timely attention, it is not improbable that some of the various talents I had acquired in the course of my education, would have furnished me with a means of subsistence, not altogether plebeian, or incompetent. But, with the uncertainty of my situation, and totally unaccustomed as I was to regard my person or mind as a machine fitted for productive labour, I had not looked to this question, till the urgency of the case deprived me of every advantage I might otherwise have seized. I was glad therefore to have recourse to menial occupation, and sought employment under the gardener of the episcopal palace, for whose service I was sufficiently qualified by my ten years' retreat in the Bordelois. That I might better adapt myself to the painful necessity of my situation, I previously exchanged some of my own clothes for garments

garments more suitable to the business I now solicited. It was not till I had arrived within a very few days to the end of my resources, that even this expedient, by a sort of accident, recurred to my mind. Marguerite, though fully aware of the urgency of the case, had, as she afterwards told me, imposed on herself a compulsory silence, fearing for the inflamed and irritated frame of my mind, and aware that the course of events would ultimately lead me to a point, with which she dreaded to intermeddle. This was for her a trying moment; my lately recovered insanity obliging her to contemplate in silence our growing distress, and to wait the attack of hunger and want that threatened to destroy us, with an apparent tranquillity and cheerfulness.

For me, too entire a revolution had taken place in my sentiments, that I
spurned

spurned with contempt, so far as related to myself. that pride of rank and romantic gallantry of honour, which had formerly been my idols. I submitted with a sort of gloomy contentment to the situation upon which my destiny drove me. I regarded it as the natural result of my former misconduct; and derived a sentiment of ease and relief, from thus expiating, as it were with the sweat of my brow, the temptations to which I had yielded. Had I been myself only reduced thus low, or had the produce of my labour been sufficient to purchase competence for my wife and the means of instruction for my family, I can safely affirm that I should have found no consequence so direct from my own degradation, as the means of silencing the reproaches of conscience and reconciling me to myself. But, when I returned in the evening with the earnings of my day's labour,

labour, and found it incompetent to the procuring for those who depended on me the simplest means of subsistence, then indeed my sensations were different. My heart died within me. I did not return after the fatigues of the day, which, to me who had not been accustomed to unremitted labour, and who now began to feel that I was not so young as I had been at the siege of Pavia, were extremely trying,—I did not return, I say, to a night of repose. I became a very woman when I looked forward, and endeavoured to picture to myself the future situation of my family. I watered my pillow with my tears. Often, when I imagined that my whole family were asleep, I gave vent to my perturbed and distracted mind in groans: Marguerite would sometimes overhear me, and, with the gentlest suggestions of her admirable mind, would endeavour to soothe

foothe my thoughts to peace. For the present, as I have said, my earnings were incompetent, and we found it necessary to supply the deficiency by the sale of the few garments, not in immediate use, that we still possessed. What then would be the case when these were gone, and when, in addition to this, it would be necessary to purchase, not only food to eat, and a roof to shelter, but also clothes to cover us?

CHAP. X.

THESE deficiencies I anxiously anticipated; but there was another evil, upon which I had not calculated, that was still nearer and more overwhelming. The mode of life in which I was now engaged, so different from any thing to which I had been accustomed, excessive fatigue, together with the occasional heat of the weather, the uneasiness of my mind and the sleeplessness of my nights, all combined to throw me into a fever, which, though it did not last long, had raged so furiously during the period of its continuance, as to leave me in a state of the most complete debility. While the disorder was upon me, I was sensible of my danger; and,

As the brilliant and consolatory prospects of life seemed for ever closed upon me, I at first regarded my approaching dissolution with complacency, and longed to be released from a series of woes, in which I had been originally involved by my own folly. This frame of mind however was of no great duration; the more nearly I contemplated the idea of separation from those I loved, the smaller was my resignation. I was unwilling to quit those dear objects by which I still held to this mortal scene; I shrunk with aversion from that barrier which separates us from all that is new, mysterious and strange. Another train of ideas succeeded this, and I began to despise myself for my impatience and cowardice. It was by my vices that my family was involved in a long train of misfortunes; could I shrink from partaking what I had not feared to create? The greater were the adversities

verities for which they were reserved, the more ought I to desire to suffer with them. I had already committed the evil; in what remained, it was reasonable to suppose I should prove their benefactor and not their foe. It was incumbent on me to soothe and to animate them, to enrich their minds with cheerfulness and courage, and to set before them an example of philosophy and patience. By my faculties of industry I was their principal hope; and, whatever we might suffer combined, it was probable their sufferings would be infinitely greater, if deprived of my assistance. These reflections gave me energy; and it seemed as if the resolute predilection I had conceived for life, contributed much to my recovery.

One thing which strongly confirmed the change my mind underwent in this respect, was a conversation that

I overheard, at a time when I was supposed to be completely in a state of insensibility, but when, though I was too much reduced to give almost any tokens of life, my faculties of hearing and understanding what passed around me, were entire. Charles came up to my bed-side, laid his hand upon mine as if to feel the state of the skin, and, with a handkerchief that was near, wiped away the moisture that bedewed my face. He had been fitted for many nurse-like offices by the unwearied attention he had exerted towards me in the paroxysm of my insanity. Having finished his task, he withdrew from the bed, and burst into tears. His mother came up to him, drew him to the furthest part of the room, and in a low voice began the conversation.

Do, my dear boy, go down stairs, and get yourself something to eat. You see, your papa is quiet now.

I am

I am afraid that will not last long, and then he will be so restless, and toss about so, it is dreadful to see him.

I will watch, Charles, and let you know.

Indeed, mamma, I cannot eat now. I will by and by.

You must try to eat, Charles, or else you will make yourself quite ill. If you were ill too, it would be more than I could support.

I will not be ill, mamma. I assure you I will not. But, besides that I have no stomach, I cannot bear to eat, when there is hardly enough for my sisters.

Eat, boy. Do not trouble yourself about that. We shall get more when that is gone. God is good, and will take care of us.

I know that God is good, but, for all that, one must not expect to have every thing one wishes. Though God

is good, there are dreadful misfortunes in the world, and I suppose we shall have our share of them.

Come, Charles, though you are but a boy, you are the best boy in the world. You are now almost my only comfort, but you will not be able to comfort me, if you do not take care of yourself.

Dear mamma!—Do you know, mamma, I heard that naughty man below stairs count up last night how much rent you owed him for, and swear you should not stay any longer, if you did not pay him. If I were a little bigger, I would talk to him so that he should not dare to insult us in our distress. But, not being big enough, I opened the door, and went into the room, and begged him for God's sake not to add to your distress. And, though he is so ugly, I took hold of his hand, and kissed it. But
it

it felt like iron, which put me in mind of his iron heart, and I cried ready to burst with mortification. He did not say hardly a word.

He must be paid, Charles: he shall be paid.

Do you know, mamma, as soon as I left him, I went to the bishop's gardens, and spoke to the gardener. I asked him, if he had heard that my papa was ill, and he said, he had. He said too, he was very sorry, and wanted to know what hand we made of it for want of the wages. I told him, we were sadly off, and the man of the house had just been affronting me about his rent. But, says I, cannot you give me something to do, to weed or to rake? I can dig a little too, and scatter seed. He asked, if I knew weeds from flowers? Oh, that I do! said I. Well then, said he, there is not much you can do, but you are a

good boy, and I will put you on the bishop's list. But now, mamma, I have not the heart to work, till I see whether papa will get well again.

While poor Charles told his artless tale, Marguerite wept over him, and kissed him again and again. She called him the best child in the world, and said that, if I were but so fortunate as to recover, with such a husband and such a son, she should yet be the happiest of women.

Oh, my poor father! exclaimed Charles. Ever since the great hail-storm, I have every hour loved him better than before. I thought that was impossible, but he is so gentle, so kind, so good-humoured and so patient! I loved him when he was harsh, and when he was out of his mind, but nothing so well then as I have done since. People that are kind and smile, always do one good; but nobody's

nobody's smiles are like my 'father's. It makes me cry with joy sometimes, when I do but think of them. Pray, papa, added he, coming up to the bedside, and whispering, yet with a hurried and passionate accent, get well! Do but get well, and we will be so happy! Never was there a family so happy or so loving as we will be!

While he spoke thus, I endeavoured to put out my hand, but I could not; I endeavoured to smile, but I was unable: my heart was in a feeble, yet soothing tranquillity. The accents of love I had heard, dwelt upon my memory. They had talked of distress, but the sentiment of love was uppermost in my recollection. I was too weak of frame, to suffer intellectual distress; no accents but those which carried balm to my spirit, seemed capable of resting upon my ear. From this hour, I regularly grew better, and,

as I recovered, seemed to feel more and more vividly how enviable it was to be the head of a loving and harmonious family.

My recovery however was exceedingly slow, and it was several weeks before I had so far recruited my strength as to be capable of my ordinary occupations. In the mean time the pecuniary difficulties to which we were exposed, hourly increased; and the cheerful, but insignificant labours of Charles, could contribute little to the support of a family. The melancholy nature of our situation might perhaps have been expected to prevent the restoration of my health. At first however it had not that effect. The debilitated state of my animal functions led me, by a sort of irresistible instinct, to reject ideas and reflections which I should then have been unable to endure. I saw the anxiety and
affection

affection of my family, and I was comforted. I saw the smiles of Marguerite, and I seemed insensible to the languor, the saddened cheerfulness they expressed. I did not perceive that, while I was provided with every thing necessary in my condition, my family were in want of the very bread that should sustain existence.

My health in the mean time improved, and my perceptions became proportionably clearer. Symptoms of desolation and famine, though as much as possible covered from my sight, obtruded themselves, and were remarked. One day, in particular I observed various tokens of this nature in silence, and with that sort of bewildered understanding, which at once labours for comprehension, and resists belief. The day closed; and what I had perceived, pressed upon my mind, and excluded sleep. Now for the first time I exerted
O 6 myself

myself to recollect in a methodical way the state of my affairs; for the severity of my illness had at length succeeded to banish from me all ideas and feelings, but what related to the sensations it produced and the objects around me; and it was not without effort that I could once more fully call to mind the scenes in which I had been engaged. The truth then by regular degrees rose completely to view; and I began to be astonished that my poor wife and children had been able in any manner to get through the horrible evils to which they must have been exposed. This thought I revolved in my mind for near two hours; and, the longer I dwelt upon it, the more perturbed and restless I grew. At length it became impossible for me to hold my contemplations pent up in my own bosom. I turned to Marguerite, and asked her, whether she were asleep.

She

She answered in the negative: she had been remarking my restlessness, and tenderly enquiring respecting its cause.

How long, said I, is it since I was taken with the fever?

A month to-morrow, replied she. It was of the most malignant and distressing kind, while it lasted, and I did not expect you to live. But it has left you a fortnight, and I hope, Reginald, you find yourself getting strong again.

And so we are here in Constance, and we have left Switzerland——?

Three months, my love!

I remember very well the letter we received from monsieur Grimfeld; has any further intelligence reached us from that quarter?

None.

None! No supply of any kind has reached you?

My

My dear Reginald, talk of something else! You will soon, I hope, be well: our children are all alive; and the calamity, that has not succeeded to separate us, or to diminish our circle of love even by a single member, we will learn to bear. Let us fix our attention on the better prospects that open before us!

Stay, Marguerite! I have other questions to ask. Before you require me to bear the calamities that have overtaken us, let me understand what these calamities are. While we waited for intelligence from Switzerland, we expended the whole sum that we brought with us, and I was obliged to hire myself to the episcopal gardener for bread; was it not so?

Indeed, Reginald, you are to blame! Pray, question me no further!

This was our condition some time ago; and now, for a month past, I have
been

been incapable of labour. Marguerite what have you done?

Indeed; my love, I have been too anxious for you, to think much of any thing else. We had still some things, you know, that we could contrive to do without, and those I have sold. Charles too, our excellent-hearted son, has lately hired himself to the gardener, and has every night brought us home a little, though it was but little.

Dear boy! What children, what a wife, have I brought to destruction! Our rent too, surely you have not been able to pay that?

Not entirely. In part I have been obliged to pay it.

Ah, I well remember how flinty-hearted a wretch has got the power over us in that respect!

He has not turned us out of doors. He threatened hard several times. At last I saw it was necessary to make an effort,

effort, and the day before yesterday I paid him half his demand. If I could have avoided that, we might have had a supply of food a little longer. I intreated earnestly for a little further indulgence, but it was in vain. It went against the pride and independence of my soul to sue to this man, but it was for you and for my children !

Remorseless wretch ! Then every petty resource we had is gone ?

Indeed I do not know that we have any thing more to sell. I searched narrowly yesterday ; but I will examine again to-day. The poor children must have something to support them, and their fare has of late been dreadfully scanty.

Their fare ! What have they eaten ?

Bread ; nothing else for the last fortnight !

And yourself ?

Oh,

Oh, Reginald ! it was necessary, you know, that I should keep myself alive. But, I assure you, I have robbed them as little as I could !

Horror, horror ! Marguerite, what is it you dream of ? I see my wife and children dying of hunger, and you talk to me of hope and of prospects ! Why has this detail of miseries been concealed from me ! Why have I been suffered, with accursed and unnatural appetite, to feed on the vitals of all I love !

Reginald ! even selfishness itself would have taught us that ! It is to your recovery that we look for our future support !

Mock me not, I adjure you, with senseless words ! You talk idly of the future, while the tremendous present bars all prospect to that future ! We are perishing by inches ! We have no provision for the coming day ! No, no ;
something

something desperate, something yet unthought of, must be attempted! I will not sit inactive, and see my offspring around me die in succession. No, by heaven! Though I am starving like Ugolino, I am not, like Ugolino, shut up in a dungeon! The world is open; its scenes are wide; the resources it offers are to the bold and despairing, innumerable! I am a father, and will show myself worthy of the name!

Reginald! torture me not by language like this! Think what it is to be indeed a father, and make yourself that! Be careful of yourself; complete your recovery,—and leave the rest to me! I have conducted it thus far, nor am I yet without hope. Eight days ago I applied to the secretary of the palace, representing your case as a retainer of the bishop, disabled by sickness, and with a family unprovided for. Till yesterday I got
no

no answer to my memorial, and then he informed me, that you had been so short a time in employ, that nothing could be done for you. But to-day I will throw myself at the feet of the bishop himself, who arrived last night only from the other side of the lake.

Every word that Marguerite uttered, went to my heart. It was not long before the dawn of the day, and the truths I had heard were further confirmed to me by the organ of sight. The sentiments of this night produced a total revolution in me, and I was no longer the feeble convalescent that the setting sun of the preceding day had left me. The film was removed from my eyes, and I surveyed not the objects around me with a glassy eye and unapprehensive observation. All the powers I possessed were alert and in motion. To my suspicions and hurried gaze the apartment appeared
stripped

stripped of its moveables, and left naked, a mansion in which for despair, to take up his abode. My children approached me; I seemed to read the wan and emaciated traces of death in their countenances. This perhaps was in some degree the painting of my too conscious thoughts. But there needed no exaggeration to awaken torture in my bosom, when, thus stimulated, I observed for the first time the dreadful change that had taken place in Marguerite. Her colour was gone; her cheeks were sunk; her eye had the quickness and discomposure expressive of debility. I took hold of her hand, and found it cold, emaciated and white. I pressed it to my lips with agony; a tear unbidden fell from my eye, and rested upon it. Having finished my examination, I took my hat, and was hastening to escape into the street. Marguerite noted my motions, and anxiously,

anxiously interposed to prevent my design. She laid her hand on my arm, gently, yet in a manner full of irresistible expostulation.

Where would you go? What have you purposed? Do not,—Oh, do not, destroy a family, to whom your life, your sobriety and prudence are indispensable!

I took her hand within both mine. Compose yourself, my love! I have been your enemy too much already, to be capable now, so much as in thought, of adding to my guilt! I need an interval for musing and determination. I will return in a very short time, and you shall be the confident of my thoughts!

With wild and impatient spirit I repassed in idea the whole history of my life. But principally I dwelt in recollection upon the marquis de Damville, that generous friend, that munificent

ficent benefactor, whose confidence I had so ill repaid. Damville! exclaimed I, you trusted to me your daughter, the dearest thing you knew on earth; you believed that the wretch did not live who could be unjust to so rich a pledge. Look down, look down, oh, best of men! from the heaven to which your virtues have raised you, and see of how much baseness man, yes, the man you disdained not to call your friend, is capable! But, no! a sight like this might well convert the heaven you dwell in to hell! You trusted her to me; I have robbed her! You enriched her mind with the noblest endowments; I have buried them in the mire of the vilest condition! All her generous, her unwearied exertions are fruitless; by my evil genius they are blasted! I have made her a mother, only that she might behold her children perishing with hunger!

They stretch out their hands to me for the smallest portion of that inheritance, which I have squandered in more than demoniac vice! This, this is the fruit of my misdeeds! I am now draining the last dregs of that mischief, of which I have so wickedly, so basely been the author!

As I returned, I met Marguerite, who was come from her attempt upon the bishop. He had received her paper, and delivered it to his secretary, that very secretary who had already disappointed all her expectations from that quarter. She had attempted to speak, to adjure the bishop, whatever he did, not to deliver her over to a man by whom her hopes had been so cruelly frustrated; but the tumult of the scene drowned her voice, and the hurry and confusion overpowered her efforts. They however drew such a degree of attention on her, that, in the
dissentions

diffentions which religious broils at that time spread in Constance, she was suspected of pressing thus earnestly towards the person of the bishop with no good design, and in fine was rudely thrust out of the palace. She had not recovered from the agitation into which she had been thrown, when I met her. I eagerly enquired into the cause of her apparent distress; but she shook her head mournfully, and was silent. I easily understood where she had been, and the failure of her experiment.

All then, said I, is at an end. Now, Marguerite, you must give up your experiments, and leave to me the cure of evils of which I only am the author. I will return this instant to the garden of the palace, and resume the situation I formerly occupied.

For God's sake, Reginald, what is it you mean? You have just acquired
strength

strength to seek the benefit of air. The least exertion fatigues you. At this moment, the little walk you have taken has covered you with perspiration. You could not dig or stoop for a quarter of an hour without being utterly exhausted.

Marguerite, I will not sit down tamely, and see my family expire. In many cases it is reasonable to bid a valetudinarian take care of himself. But our situation is beyond that. I must do something. Extraordinary circumstances often bring along with them extraordinary strength. No man knows, till the experiment, what he is capable of effecting. I feel at this moment no debility; and I doubt not that the despair of my mind will give redoubled energy to my efforts.

While I spoke thus, I was conscious that I had little more than the strength of a new-born child. But I could not

endure at such a time to remain in inactivity. I felt as much ashamed of the debilitated state in which my fever had left me, as I could have done of the most inglorious effeminacy and cowardice of soul. I was determined to relieve my family, or perish in the attempt. If all my efforts were vain, I could not better finish my career, than exhausted, sinking, expiring under a last exertion to discharge the duties of my station.

We returned into the house. Marguerite took from a closet the last remnant of provisions we had, the purchase of poor Charles's labour of the preceding day. There was a general contest who should escape from receiving any part in the distribution. Charles had withdrawn himself, and was not to be found. Julia endeavoured to abscond, but was stopped by Louisa and her mother. She had
wept

wept so much, that inanition seemed more dangerous for her, than perhaps for any other of the circle. No one can conceive, who has not felt it, how affecting a contest of this kind must appear to me, sensible as I was to the danger that their virtue and generous affection were the prelude only to their common destruction. I said, There was a general contest who should avoid all share in the distribution; but I recollect that the little Marguerite, two years and a half old, exclaimed at first, I am so hungry, mamma! But, watching, as she carefully did, every thing that passed, she presently laid down her bread upon the table, in silence, and almost untouched; and, being asked, Why she did so? she replied in a tone of speaking sensibility, Thank you, I am not hungry now!

This scene made an impression on my mind, never to be forgotten. It

blasted and corrupted all the pulses of my soul. A little before, I had reconciled myself to poverty; I had even brought myself to regard it with cheerfulness. But the sentiment was now reversed. I could endure it, I could steel myself against its attacks; but never from this hour, in the wildest paroxysms of enthusiasm, has it been the topic of my exultation or my panegyric. No change of circumstances, no inundation of wealth, has had the power to obliterate from my recollection what I then saw. A family perishing with hunger; all that is dearest to you in the world sinking under the most dreadful of all the scourges with which this sublunary scene is ever afflicted; no help near; no prospect but of still accumulating distress; a death, the slowest, yet the most certain and the most agonizing, that can befall us; no, there is nothing

thing that has power to rend all the strings of the heart like this! From this moment, the whole set of my feelings was changed. Avarice descended, and took possession of my soul. Haunted, as I perpetually was, by images of the plague of famine, nothing appeared to me so valuable as wealth; nothing so desirable as to be placed at the utmost possible distance from want. An appetite of this kind is insatiable; no distance seems sufficiently great; no obstacles, mountains on mountains of gold, appear an adequate security to bar from us the approach of the monster we dread.

While I speak of the sentiments which in the sequel were generated in my mind by what I now saw, I am suspending my narrative in a crisis at which a family, interesting, amiable and virtuous, is reduced to the lowest state of humiliation and distress.

They are moments like these, that harden the human heart, and fill us with inextinguishable hatred and contempt for our species. They tear off the trappings and decoration of polished society, and show it in all its hideousness. The wanton eye of pampered pride pleases itself with the spectacle of cities and palaces, the stately column and the swelling arch. It observes at hand the busy scene, where all are occupied in the various pursuits of pleasure or industry, and admires the concert, the wide-spreading confederacy, by means of which each after his mode is unconsciously promoting the objects of others. Cheated by the outside of things, we denominate this a vast combination for general benefit. The poor and the famished man contemplates the scene with other thoughts. Unbribed to admire and applaud, he sees in it a confederacy of hostility and
general

general oppression. He sees every man pursuing his selfish ends, regardless of the wants of others. He sees himself contemptuously driven from the circle, where the rest of his fellow-citizens are busily and profitably engaged. He lives in the midst of a crowd, without one friend to feel an interest in his welfare. He lives in the midst of plenty, from the participation of which he is driven by brutal menaces and violence. No man who has not been placed in his situation, can imagine the sensations, with which, overwhelmed as he is with domestic ruin and despair, he beholds the riot, the prodigality, the idiot ostentation, the senseless expence, with which he is surrounded on every side. What were we to do? Were we to beg along the streets? Were we to intreat for wretched offals at rich men's doors? Alas, this, it was to be feared, even if

we

we stooped to the miserable attempt, instead of satisfying wants for ever new, would only prolong in the bitterness of anguish the fate for which we were reserved!——

An unexpected relief at this time presented itself. While the scanty meal I have mentioned was yet unfinished, a letter was presented me inclosing under its cover a bill of one hundred crowns. The letter was from Bernardin, the faithful servant, whom we had found it necessary to dismiss three months before, when we quitted our residence in Switzerland. It informed us that, as soon as he had parted from us, he had set out on his return to his native town, next adjacent to my paternal residence, that he found his father had died a short time before, and that, from the sale of his effects, he had reaped an inheritance, to trip the amount of the sum he had now forwarded

forwarded to us. He had heard by accident of the death of our friend in Switzerland, and the character of his successor, and dreaded that the consequences might prove highly injurious to us. He had still some business to settle with the surviving branches of his family, but that would be over in a few weeks, and then, if we would allow him, he would return to his dear master, and afford us every assistance in his power. The little property that had now fallen to him would prevent him from being a burthen, and he would hire a spot of land, and remain near us, if we refused him the consolation of returning to his former employment.

What a reproach was it to me, that, descended from one of the most illustrious families in Europe, the heir of an ample patrimony, and receiving a still larger fortune in marriage,

riage, I should, by the total neglect and profligate defiance of the duties incumbent on me, have reduced myself so low, as to be indebted to a peasant and a menial for the means of saving my family from instant destruction! This was a deep and fatal wound to the pride of my soul. There was however no alternative, no possibility of rejecting the supply afforded us at so eventful a moment. We determined to use it for the present, and to repay it with the earliest opportunity; and in the following week, in spite of the remonstrances of Marguerite, the yet feeble state of my health, and the penalties annexed to the proceeding, I set off for the canton of Soleure, determined, if possible, to wrest the little staff of my family from the hand that so basely detained it.

I passed through Zurich and a part of the canton of Basle without obstacle;

cle; these parts of Switzerland had not suffered from the calamity which had occasioned our exile. In proceeding further, I found it necessary to assume a disguise, and to avoid large towns and frequented roads. I reached at length the well known scene in which I had so lately consumed twelve months of my life; in which I first began to breathe (to breathe, not to be refreshed) from ruin, beggary and exile. There was no pleasing recollection annexed to this spot; it was a remembrancer of shame, sorrow and remorse. Yet, such is the power of objects once familiar, revisited after absence, that my eye ran over them with delight, I felt lightened from the weariness of the journey, and found that the recollection of pains past over and subdued was capable of being made a source of gratification. The mountains among which I had wandered,

dered, and consumed, as it were, the last dregs of my insanity, furrounded me; the path in which I was travelling led along one of their ridges. I had performed this part of my journey by night; and the first gleams of day now began to streak the horizon. I looked towards the cottage, the distant view of which had so often, in moments of the deepest despair, awakened in my heart the soothing of sympathy and affection. I saw that as yet it remained in its forlorn condition, and had undergone no repair; while the lands around, which had lately experienced the superintendence of Marguerite, had met with more attention, and began to resume the marks of culture. I sighed for the return of those days and that situation, which, while present to me, had passed unheeded and unenjoyed.

I repaired

I repaired to the house of my late protector, now the residence of monsieur Grimfeld. He was a meagre, shrivelled figure; and, though scarcely arrived at the middle of human life, exhibited all the marks of a premature old age. I disclosed myself to him, and began warmly to expostulate with him upon the profligacy of his conduct. He changed colour, and betrayed symptoms of confusion, the moment I announced myself. While I pressed him with the barbarity of his conduct, the dreadful effects it had already produced, and the incontestible justice of my claim, he stammered, and began to propose terms of accommodation. During this conversation we were alone. After some time however a servant entered the room, and the countenance of the master assumed an expression of satisfaction and

confidence. He eagerly seized on the occasion which presented itself, and, instantly changing his tone, called on his servant to assist him in securing a criminal against the state. I at first resisted, but Grimfeld, perceiving this, applied to his bell with great vehemence, and three other servants made their appearance, whose employment was in the field, but who had now accidentally come into the house for refreshment. I had arms; but I found it impracticable to effect my escape; and I soon felt that, by yielding to the impulse of indignation, and punishing Grimfeld on the spot for his perfidy, I might ruin, but could not forward, the affair in which I was engaged.

I was conducted to prison; and the thoughts produced in me by this sudden reverse, were extremely melancholy.

choly and discouraging. Grimsfeld was a man of opulence and power; I was without friends, or the means of procuring friends. The law expressly condemned my return; and what had I not to fear from law, when abetted and enforced by the hand of power? I might be imprisoned for ten years; I might be imprisoned for life. I began earnestly to wish that I had remained with my family, and given up at least all present hopes of redress. It would be a dreadful accumulation of all my calamities, if now at last I and my children were destined to suffer, perhaps to perish, in a state of separation; and the last consolations of the wretched, those of suffering, sympathizing and condoling with each other, were denied us.

Full of these tragical forebodings, I threw myself at first on the floor of

my cell in a state little short of the most absolute despair. I exclaimed upon my adverse fortune, which was never weary of persecuting me. I apostrophised, with tender and distracted accents, my wife and children, from whom I now seemed to be cut off by an everlasting divorce. I called upon death to put an end to these tumults and emotions of the soul, which were no longer to be borne.

In a short time however I recovered myself, procured the implements of writing, and drew up, in the strong and impressive language of truth, a memorial to the council of the state. I was next to consider how this was to reach its destination; for there was some danger that it might be intercepted by the vigilance and malignity of my adversary. I desired to speak
with

with the keeper of the prison. He had some recollection of me, and a still more distinct one of my family. He concurred with the general sentiment, in a strong aversion to the character of Grimfeld. As I pressed upon him the hardship of my case, and the fatal consequences with which it might be attended, I could perceive that he fully entered into the feeling with which I wished him to be impressed. He blamed my rashness in returning to Switzerland in defiance of the positive prohibition that had been issued; but promised at all events that my paper should be delivered to the president to-morrow morning.

I remained three days without an answer, and these days were to me an eternity. I anticipated every kind of misfortune; I believed that law and malice

malice had succeeded to the subversion of equity. At length however I was delivered from my apprehensions and perplexity, and summoned to appear before the council. It was well for me perhaps that I had to do with a government so simple and moderate as that of Switzerland. I obtained redress. It was referred to an arbitration of neighbours to set a fair price on my property, and then decreed that, if monsieur Grimfeld refused the purchase, the sum should be paid me out of the coffers of the state. He was also condemned in a certain fine for the fraud he had attempted to commit. The affair, thus put in train, was soon completed; and I returned with joy, having effected the object of my journey, to my anxious and expecting family. Soon after we removed to the spot we had chosen on the eastern bank of
of

of the lake, where we remained for the
following years in a state of peace
and tranquillity.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Printed by J. CUNDELL,
Ivy-Lane.